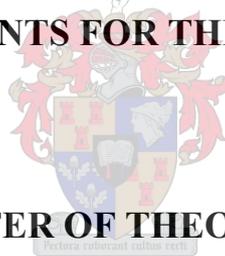


**NURTURING HONOUR AND SHAME IN STORIES OF THE
BEGINNING IN GENESIS: BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN
DIGNITY ACCORDING TO CULTURES IN SOUTHERN KADUNA**

BY

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**THIS IS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF**



MASTER OF THEOLOGY

AT THE

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

SUPERVISOR: PROF. HENDRIK L. BOSMAN

December 2013

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not beforehand in its entirety or in part been submitted at any university for a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This research evaluates and explores the problem of “How stories of the beginning impact on the theological understanding of human dignity” in relation to Genesis 6:1-4.

1. In this thesis, the first chapter was conducted through a literature study of existing research and current materials which include general articles, monographs and other related materials. It is argued that the stories of the beginning have much impact on the culture of honour and shame in understanding human dignity in southern Kaduna.

2. In the second chapter, the concepts of honour and shame were regarded as reciprocal terms that are defined in webs. As such, semantic fields were used to define and analyse the different views on honour and shame especially from the perspectives of the ancient Near East and Old Testament.

3. In the third chapter, the stories of beginning among the Atyap and their neighbours were related as significant for understanding right and wrong, and identity formation for human dignity and self-respect.

4. Notably in the fourth chapter, “honour and shame” in narratives are not merely important to the individual but also to the family, clan and tribe. Due to its implication, people worked hard to achieve honour or respect which is mostly bestowed as titles of repute on people. It is established from the creation narratives that Genesis 1-3 has been considered for human dignity research in the past but it is equally important to look at the neglected evidence in Genesis 6:1-4.

5. In the fifth chapter, an exposition of Genesis 6:1-4 was carried out to illustrate the idea of honour from the story about the בני־הַגְּבִיִּים who disrespectfully married the daughters of Cain. The honourable נְפִלִים and גְּבִרִים were interpreted as the “sons of Seth” who were active, living and had the likelihood of falling into such temptations. The prospect of giants, “men of name” and “heroes of renown” meekly stooping low to the shameful women was unthinkable at that time; as such, a picture of utter disrespect is painted from different angles.

6. In the sixth chapter, the culture of honour and shame required that so much effort be exerted daily on the populace in order to achieve respect.

It was recommended that the Old Testament stories of the beginning remained noteworthy for the stories, ethnic groups and languages of southern Kaduna. Essentially, with respect to our question and hypotheses, honour and shame in Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern

stories of the beginning facilitated the understanding of southern Kaduna stories. In view of the fact that everyone desires to be important, the notion of honour and shame became the scale for evaluating respect and value. It was equally useful for appreciating human dignity and not just as a tool of entertainment or for promoting cultural heritage, religious/ethical teaching and community interaction. It was concluded that unfamiliar cultures such as those of southern Kaduna can be useful as case studies for Old Testament research in the future and that scholars could focus on such neglected regions. In this research on honour and shame, we have also uncovered a fresh picture of the recreation of the earth and a new beginning of humankind from the story of the בני־הָאָדָמָה in Genesis 6:1-4.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie ondersoek evalueer die probleem wat verband hou met die vraag: “Hoe word die begrippe van “eer en skaamte” uitgebeeld in die verhale oor die begin in suidelike Kaduna kulture en watter rol speel dit binne die handhawing van menswaardigheid in Genesis 6:1-4.

1. Die eerste hoofstuk word ingelei deur ‘n literatuurstudie oor joernaalartikels, monografië en ander verwante materiaal. Daar word geargumenteer dat die verhale oor die begin respek in die vorm van eer en skaamte veronderstel en dat dit belangrik is vir die verstaan van menswaardigheid in die kulture van suidelike Kaduna.

2. In die tweede hoofstuk word die begrippe van eer en skaamte as wederkerige begrippe gedefinieer. Semantiese velde is gebruik om die betekenisnuanses van eer en skaamte vanuit ou Nabye Oosterse en Ou-Testamentiese perspektiewe te definieer en te analiseer.

3. Die derde hoofstuk ondersoek die verhale oor die begin wat deur die Atyap en hulle bure oorvertel word en wat as betekenisvol beskou word vir die begrip van reg en verkeerd, sowel as identiteitsvorming en menswaardigheid.

4. Van besondere belang is die vierde hoofstuk waar eer en skaamte se implikasies vir individue, families, sibbes en stamme uitgespel word. Die meeste mense streef na eer as vorm van respek wat veral in die titels en reputasies van mense gereflekteer word. Navorsing oor die skeppingsverhale het aangetoon dat Genesis 1 – 3 baie klem in die verlede ontvang het wanneer menswaardigheid ondersoek is; terwyl die afgeskepte Genesis 6:1-4 weinig onder die akademiese soeklig geval het.

5. Die vyfde hoofstuk bestaan uit ‘n eksegetiese ondersoek van Genesis 6:1-4 wat aantoon dat eer en skaamte betrokke is by die beskrywing van die “seuns van God” wat op ‘n oneervolle manier met die dogters van Kain trou. Eer en skaamte is ook betrokke in die beskrywing van die *Nefilim* en die *Giborim*, wat gesamentlik as die “seuns van Set” verstaan word. Daar bestaan dus ‘n teenstelling tussen die eerbiedwaardige reuse, manne van naam en helde met reputasie en die oneerbiedige omgang met die vroue van die aarde.

6. In die sesde hoofstuk word omskryf hoe daar ‘n kultuur van eer en skaamte gevestig word ten einde respek af te dwing en menswaardigheid te handhaaf.

Hierdie studie het vasgestel dat eer en skaamte van deurslaggewende belang is vir die verstaan van die verhale oor die begin in Kaduna, die ou Nabye Ooste en die Ou Testament. Die algemene strewe na belangrikheid maak eer en skaamte belangrike aspekte van ‘n verwysingsraamwerk in terme waarvan respek en waardes beoordeel word. In dieselfde asem

moet genoem word dat eer en skaamte ‘n nuwe waardering vir menswaardigheid moontlik maak. Onbekende kulture soos die in suidelike Kaduna bied ook nuttige perspektiewe wat konstruktief in Ou-Testamentiese studie benut kan word – die rol van eer en skaamte in die interpretasie van die “seuns van God” in Genesis 6:1-4 is ‘n goeie voorbeeld daarvan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I must first acknowledge God who kept me alive on this difficult journey. My appreciation goes to my promoter Prof Hendrik L. Bosman who is the “vessel to be honoured” for the success of this work. He is not just a supervisor and a mentor, but a father close to my heart. Sir, I cannot forget those times you asked about my personal life, my family and your use of ‘proverbs’ to describe how research ought to be carried out. Sir, you have succeeded in taking shame away from me and making me worthy of this honour.

Others who helped in making Stellenbosch a home away from home include Prof Nico Koopman, (sir, I cannot forget your gentle prayers), Rev Liena Hoffman a mother who cares, Pastor Dr Funlola Olojede – a spiritual mentor I found, Rev Dr Nathan Chiroma and Dr Matthew Michael – my lecturers and brothers who encouraged me, as well as Rev Dr D.H. Kajom. I cannot forget my very good HOD Prof Louis Jonker; your humour indeed makes us feel at home in the department. The encouraging smiles from the departmental secretary Estelle Muller (who I call ‘assistant Prof’) and the fellowship with my colleagues at the Old Testament seminars mean so much to me. I would also like to appreciate my parents in the Lord Rev and Mrs Y.S. Nmadu Jnr., and Rev and Mrs Karma Mairafi; I remain your son, no matter my level in this life.

I wish to acknowledge the Stellenbosch University and its theology faculty for awarding me bursary from the Hope Project. Indeed, there is hope of dignity in the next generation. I also cannot forget the International and postgraduate office and the Dutch Reformed Church for the Merit Award—your contributions are highly appreciated. I cannot count the number of times the faculty of theology and my supervisor assisted me financially to ensure that I concentrate on my research project. Prof, thank you for granting me the opportunity to compile the Old Testament Data base and the financial support that came with it, again I say “thank you” to all who showed concern to me.

I wish to express much gratitude to my family for praying always for me and for remaining strong in my absence. To my dear wife Martha (Arziki) and the children El-Tsadiq Jonah and El-Baruch Nathaniel, ‘I LOVE YOU’ you are everything to me. You can see that being away from you is profitable. To my mother, thank you for teaching me to speak Tyap. I also

appreciate your persistent prayers. Although Baba is not alive to rejoice with me and share this honour, we remain grateful to God. To my brothers and sisters and their families, I say, “thank you all” I miss you. I cannot forget my friends and colleagues in the ministry (ECWA Kaduna, Central DCC) especially the leadership in the persons of Rev Joshua Anyom and Rev Bitrus Bamai who approved my study leave. Great thanks to members of ECWA Mounted Troop Kabala Doki Kaduna and members of RCCG, Desire of Nations Parish in Stellenbosch. I cannot overlook the contributions of Elder Bulus Kajang, Elder and Mrs B.Z.H. Butswat, General Zamani Lekwot (rtd) who corrected my *Tyap* in this study and Elder and Mrs Johnson Akoka. Thanks to Rev Dr Mari Habu (rtd), Rev Dr Chidawa Kaburuk, Baba Tonak Dabo, Baba Sgt Gwanyo (rtd), Baba John Yibin and Rev Prof. Zamani B. Kafang who gave me some old stories about our people.

Lastly, it is important to say “thank you” to all southern Kaduna chiefs and their chiefdoms especially His Royal highness Dr Harison Yusuf Bungwon the Chief of Tyap chiefdom, I appreciate your cooperation and willingness to provide me with the information needed; may God keep you and increase your wisdom in leading your subjects with dignity and honour. *“What more can I do? What more can I say, than to still say thank you Lord”?*

The Map of Southern Kaduna



Accessed online from: Zitt location project, www.zitt.sourceforge.net/zitt.php?su=eng8ibe=4

(The areas in **white** represent different the Local Government Areas in Southern Kaduna, and **Zangon Kataf Local Government Area is where the Atyp are mostly found, they are also in Jama'a and part of Kaura**, the Akurmi are mostly in Lere and part of Kaura, Jju are also mostly found in Zangon Kataf, and Jama'a with a scanty settlements in Jaba, the Gwong are mostly found in Jama'a and part of Jaba while Ham are mostly in Jaba and Kachia respectively). They are spread and all live in communities interrelated to one another sharing lots of similarities, probably because of the intermarriages from the olden days to modern times.

ABBREVIATIONS

ANE – Ancient Near East

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BHS – Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

CBQMS – Catholic Biblical Quarterly Mission Series

CNN – Cable Network News

DDD – Dictionary of Deities and Demons

IDB – International Dictionary of the Bible

JBL – Jewish Biblical Literature

JPS – Jewish Publication Society

KJV – King James Version

LXX – Septuagint

MT – Masoretic Text

NBC – New Bible Commentary

NIB – New Interpreters Bible

NIDB – New International Dictionary of the Bible

NIDOTTE – New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis

NIV – New International Version

NRSV – New Revised Standard Version

NT – New Testament

OT – Old Testament

OTE – Old Testament Essays

SBL – Society of Biblical Literature

TDOT – Theological Dictionary of Old Testament

UNISA – University of South Africa

YHWH – Yahweh

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Stories are significant in human history and relationships. In certain cultures, stories were the documents by which life was defined. It has been an important aspect of the social life of human beings especially of people that trace the origin of humankind from such assessments. Stories of the beginning defined the human origin and provided a foundation for human existence, making life meaningful to humankind. There was no life—no bird sang, no fish glistened in the water, no people filled the air with noise, no wind blew and no spirit hovered over the waters—everything was silent, motionless and empty. Pure silence reigned over all things. These stories were the roots of the people, as the universe originated from the stories or myths of the beginning (Van Wolde¹ 1997:1). This is similar to how the biblical account of creation in Genesis 1-2 emanated in the ancient Near East context.

In a similar manner, Southern Kaduna cultures had various stories of the beginning, based on the cultures and customs of the local community. They were orally documented, re-stated and passed on from one generation to the other in order to preserve history and make meaning to the hearers. The stories later developed as the foundation of their belief systems which also determined their idea of God as the “creator,” “provider,” “protector,” “maker,” “builder” or even the cause of all things related to human beings. This is also similar to the method the Jews used in their early history to preserve their stories, experiences and culture so that the succeeding generations would be able to know how God related to their forefathers in covenant and mighty deeds.

In the same way, in Africa and some parts of the world, creation is the most widely acknowledged work of God, thus the creator’s name was informed from the cultural, social and religious activities of the people. Such names were possible by means of metaphors such as moulder, maker, inventor, excavator, rain, sun/stars/skies/moon. Others include protector,

¹ Ellen Van Wolde is a Professor of Old Testament Exegesis and Hebrew in the Theological Faculty of Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands. She is the author of *Stories of the Beginning*.

builder, provider and sustainer, etc. The Banyarwandas of eastern Africa commonly used the metaphor of a potter to describe God's creative act of God shaping children in their mother's womb before they are born. The Tiv of the Middle Belt of Nigeria, due to their interest in woodwork, referred to God as the carver (Mbiti 1990:39)². The Yorubas and Igbos of Nigeria also had various versions of stories of the origin of human beings either from Olodumare or from Chukwu "the greater Gods" that live in heaven far from humans. Similarly, the southern Kaduna peoples have meaningful stories about God and names for God such as "Gwaza", "Kazah", "Nom," etc., which translate as the creator. There are many more examples of such names among the southern Kaduna peoples which will be discussed later.

The beginning was created with honour and dignity according to Genesis 1:26-28 before humankind the crown of God's creation was made. Genesis 2 is a record of the second creation story while Genesis 3 is the story of the human fall. Similarly, the example in Genesis 6:1-4³ of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים *beney ha elohim*⁴ (Sons of God/gods) versus the daughters of men depicts a picture of honour and shame using metaphors and vocabularies of creation in the text such as the forceful sexual relationship, the beauty or fair looks of the women, the birth of גִּבּוֹרִים *gibborim* (giants) and the men of name (honour⁵). Again, it is obvious in Genesis 2-3 that God punished Adam and Eve because of their evil and wickedness. In the same way, because of the evil of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in Genesis 6:1-4, God decided that "his spirit" would not abide with human beings forever; as such, he reduced the human life span (Gen 6:3). At that time, human beings lived longer indicating honour as opposed to shame today. While Genesis 1-11 contains records of the beginning and a larger context of creation,

² John S. Mbiti 1969. *African Religion and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann. Mbiti was a Professor of Theology and Comparative Religion at Makerere University College now retired in Switzerland.

³ It must be admitted that Genesis 6:1-4 is a provisional pericope before the demarcation of the text. Notably also, even before J inserted Genesis 6:1-4 into his work, stories or myths of this kind were in existence in Israel and the ancient Near East. It is highly likely that the text relates a Canaanite story/myth because the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים *beney ha elohim* (sons of God/gods) are known from Canaanite mythology in which they mostly play important roles (Westermann 1984:369). Although some scholars see the sons of God as angels, others say they are the children of Seth who married the daughters of Cain (Louth 2001:123). However, what is important to this research is that stories or myths help to define human dignity from the perspective of honour and shame in some cultures.

⁴ The use of Hebrew words with their transliteration and translation is to allow room for the broader or non academic audience including southern Kaduna, most whom do not have a good knowledge of Hebrew language. It is also important to indicate the technical or Hebrew terms due to nature of the work; this is all because the work is both to an academic as well as non academic audience.

⁵ Birth was categorized and honoured depending on the sex and health of the child, a male child was to some extent more able than the mother who gave birth to him. Giving birth to giants was a greater honour especially since they were pictured as males (symbols of heritage) who were also healthy and would probably give the family and clan good children. The mother was honoured in such cases.

Genesis 12-50 serves as a pointer to the initial life of the Jews, especially their origin, but specifically, Genesis 6:1-4 has some relevance for this study.

The elements employed in the narrative in Genesis 6:1-4 are significant for understanding the concept of honour and shame. Nevertheless, storytellers and poets are often closer to experiences and feelings in an important way as they express what a “fact” is in their storyline and in the “objectives”. In this regard, one can say that both the explanatory power of narratives and the narrative power of explanations will be at the core of this research (Van Wolde 1997:1-2). In a manner reminiscent of narratives, the Israelites were encouraged to uphold honour by repeatedly teaching⁶ the laws of Yahweh to be sure it sinks into the heart of the younger generation who would in turn pass it to the next generation. In Deuteronomy 6:7-9, Moses instructed parents to diligently teach their children the fear of the Lord when they walk, sit, lie down or rise up and to “write them as a sign post on their hand, on their gate or doors and to bind them in their heart”. This is also analogous to the southern Kaduna practice of using stories significantly as a method of imbibing dignity, history and morality in members of the community. Adults would tell stories in the evening after dinner, before children went to bed. Just as stories are important to understanding one’s personality, so is the story of the beginning significant to understanding human dignity.

1.2 Research Problems and Questions

The major question here is, “How do the stories of the beginning impact on the theological understanding of human dignity?” Van Wolde claims that various stories of origin, beliefs, and ideas of God as creator shape the importance people attach to one another and the dignity they give to fellow human beings as well as how they develop their concept of order and respect in the community. She states that:

The beginning was full of meaning in order to provide a base and purpose for human existence. Looking at God’s creation and its re-creation by human beings in language, story and history, no matter how original, creative and enticing your story may be, nothing can be without a beginning” (Van Wolde 1997:1-2).

⁶ Deuteronomy 6:1-9. The significance of the teaching indicates that God decided to redeem humans based on the judgment of good and bad conducts which is similar to the standard of honour and shame in the society.

There are three important questions for this research. First is, of what significance are the stories of the beginning to the understanding of human dignity in the cultures of southern Kaduna? Second is, if the stories of the beginning helped in shaping the social, religious and cultural life of people, how then have these stories triggered the understanding of the human dignity and self-worth from the time of creation? Third is, in Genesis 6:1-4, who were the **בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים** (sons of the God/gods)? It is equally important to inquire how the divine men saw or chose the *tobot* (good, beautiful) women (human), and what is meant by the shameful relationship between them (Oduyoye 1984:23)⁷? The research will attempt to answer the questions above in order to define human dignity in the particular context of Southern Kaduna.

The myths or stories determine and shape the communities in southern Kaduna. It is also believed that without these stories about the beginning, human beings would have been confused and their origin also vague. According to many stories of creation, humans were originally in a state of happiness. Like children, they were uninformed, and they were immortal, having the ability to rise again after death. God provided them with everything they needed to live the life of paradise on earth (Mbiti 1969:95). God changed his plans for humankind when sin (shame) infiltrated the created order.

1.3 Hypotheses

The premises and proposal are that:

- First, emphasizing on honour and shame will clarify how the stories of the beginning impact on the theological understanding of human dignity.
- Secondly, the relegated stories of the beginning will be appreciated to describe the roles of the characters in defining and alleviating the value and self-worth of humankind from the unpopular southern Kaduna cultures. Honour and Shame among neglected cultures like *Atyap* and their neighbours will serve as the frame of reference here.
- Thirdly, Genesis 6:1-4 is an important (though neglected) pericope that will illustrate the significance of honour and shame for the understanding of human dignity. Our

⁷ Modupe Oduyoye is a Nigerian exegete and philologist. He was a William Paton Fellow at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham 1981-1982. He served as the literature secretary of the Christian Council of Nigerians and as manager of the Daystar Press in Ibadan. He took the pain to study Genesis 6:1-4 from a Nigerian perspective but his interpretation was rather brief. However, his work was the bedrock for this research especially as it relates to story. It is interesting that the scholar single out this text, though he did not dabble on honour and shame but the intriguing story was an eye opener to the perspectives in this work.

attention will also be drawn to the exegesis of Genesis 6:1-4 (provisionally), to portrays honour and shame.

It is sometimes believed that minorities have nothing to contribute as agents of change in terms of the appreciation of human dignity in the larger context of a community as in Psalm 8:3-5. The stories of the beginning are often regarded as myths, legends or tales as such not so much is expected out of them, which is why they have been relegated or neglected in the studies of human dignity in biblical narratives. Most of the research in the creation narratives in Genesis 1-11 were conducted within Genesis 1-3, but the myth or story of the beginning in Genesis 6:1-4 has been neglected.

1.4 Methodology

- First, this research requires literature study of existing research in monographs, general articles and current research related to the stories of the beginning. A Semantic study of the key words will be the methodology for reviewing the literatures due to the relatedness of the terminologies in question.
- Second is a comparative study of stories of the beginning between the *Atyap* and their neighbours with other cultures that depicts honour and shame either from the Ancient Near East or in the Old Testament.
- Third is exegesis of Genesis 6:1-4, which will be carried out using a close reading of the pericope for the understanding of honour and shame by demarcating the text, providing textual criticism and a personal translation, then interpreting the text taking into cognizance the literary, historical and theological aspects of the pericope.

However, this research will not only be restricted to Stellenbosch University's theology library, but anywhere relevant materials are found especially within South Africa. In addition, personal telephone interviews were conducted among the five selected southern Kaduna cultures as (*Akurmi, Atyap, Bajju, Gwong* and *Ham*), but it will only be reflected in an article which is written concurrently with this thesis. The aim of this research once again is to explain the significance of honour and shame according to the cultures of southern Kaduna from the stories of the beginning, for the propagation of human dignity.

1.5 Definition of Terms

In order to investigate the culture of honour and shame from the stories of the beginning among the southern Kaduna people, it will be helpful to define certain terms such as honour, shame, human dignity, and so forth.

1.5.1 Honour

The concept of honour in the Hebrew language is represented by the word *kabed* which means to be heavy or to impress and make people happy. It is the self-worth of humans which glorifies the individual, family, clan or the group in question. Honour usually results in people being elevated in the eyes of the community as a result of doing what is right. It is often found in the context of retributive theology where honour or good works are equated with right action (Morgan 1982:750). Furthermore, honour is a reference to an experience of being esteemed by a group or person on the basis of accomplishing what they desire, while shame is an experience of failing to measure up to their expectations. The desirability and social approval of one's characters is called honour (De Silva 2008:287-288).

1.5.2 Shame

The term shame in Hebrew is the word *bosh* meaning “behaviours or characters that devalues or belittles a person and measures one’s failure in the society, a person that is failing to reach the community’s standard of morality”. Its synonyms include to lessen, degrade, disgrace, or to dishonour an individual who misbehaves before others, as well as to despise or shame an individual (De Silva 2003:432; 2008:287). In addition, the word shame is used as a noun to indicate the condition of being humiliated, a situation in which a person, city or nation is brought to loss of respect or an exposure to reproach. In other words, it is a disgraceful conduct and its consequences (Dozeman 1988:446).

From the above definitions, one can deduce that the idea of honour and shame is the value or respect humans exert on one another from the observance of people’s daily interactions in a given locality. The judgment of honour and shame is relatively dependent on what a particular culture accepts as honourable and how the observers of positive behaviours understand honour or shame. While honour comes from the ability to keep to the rules and regulations of the community, shame comes from the inability to keep the laws and regulations of that same community.

1.5.3 Human Dignity

Human dignity is a term that validly ensures the inviolability of a person's right to life. It is used to affirm that all human beings are created or born with equal dignity, and blessed with the sense of reasoning and consciousness to relate with humaneness to other creatures (Starke 2001:602). Another view of human dignity is that it consists of three unique relationships that God established for humans, which make up a larger part of our life namely the right to be human and to enjoy the value or position of being in the image and likeness of the creator, and the privilege of relating with God (Stott 2006:98-99). Human dignity therefore means the opportunity or freedom that is given to human beings to exercise their God-given talents for the benefit of other creatures and to equate their humanity to others, whether white, coloured, black or Asian. It could also be the respectful consideration and acceptance revealed as the "image of God" in humanity not minding the status, religion, gender or race.

1.5.4 Biblical Perspectives

Genesis is regarded as the book of the stories of origin and beginning, since it contains the records of the origin of human beings and the beginning of creation especially as it relates to the context of the ancient Near East, for it is assumed that the culture of honour and shame developed in the ancient times. Genesis 1-11 is the wider scope of the narratives of creation within which the discussions in Chapters 1- 3 of this study emanate, as well as Chapter 6 which relates an ancient myth and addresses the concept of honour and shame. The stories are also necessary for a better conception of the southern Kaduna cultures and the idea of human dignity. Other biblical passages (especially Ps. 8, 104; Prov. 31; Isah. 40-45) and concepts such as holiness, obedience, wisdom, vanity, restoration and many others, which also focus on issues of the beginning and the creation of humankind, have been related to the discourse on human dignity.

1.5.5 Southern Kaduna

As the name implies, southern Kaduna is located in the southern part of Kaduna state in the northern region of Nigeria. The area is home to different ethnic groups with diverse cultures, which also have many things in common and live as relatives in the same locality. The culture in the area is marked by the popular Nok Civilization from 500 BCE, which covered

quite a wide range of peoples in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. The ethnic groups⁸ in southern Kaduna include Adara, Aeogrok, Akurmi, Anghan, Aninkong, Ankung, Asholio, Atuku, Atyap, Ayu, Bajju, Bakulu, Binawa, Chori, Duya, Fantswam, Fulani, Galadimawa (Rumaya), Ganawuri, Gbagyi, Gure, Gwandara and Gwong. Others are Ham, Hausa, Janji, Jarawa, Kacecere, Kaibi, Kitimi, Kiwafa, Kiwolo, Kono, Koro, Kuturmi, Mada, Maguzawa, Miango, Nandu, Ninzon, Numana, Pitti, Ragga, Rishuwa, Rukuba, Sambang, Sayawa, Surubu, Takad, Tari, Tsam, Yankpa, Warsa and many others. The people live in clusters or groups that share several similarities and dialects. Although there are more than sixty different groups in the area, they all lived together as neighbours and as one big family. They are industrious and they respect their cultural heritage on local grounds.

It is believed that the southern Kaduna people originated⁹ from the Borno region, and moved to Bauchi-Plateau and from there to their present settlement. It is also believed that the Atyap are the earliest settlers in that region. The Hausa-Fulani constitute the majority among the people groups in northern Nigeria and are predominantly Muslims though there are a good number of Christians among them. The Hausa language is the lingua franca commonly spoken in northern Nigeria, which shows the influence of the Hausa-Fulani on the people of southern Kaduna. To an extent, the ethnic groups in southern Kaduna have Hausa equivalent for their names such as “Akurmi-Kurama” “Atyap-Kataf”, “Bajju-Kaje”, “Ham-Jaba” and “Gwong-Kagoma”. In this thesis, these five people groups will be used to represent their close neighbours and the rest of the sixty tribes, but the research will make brief mention of some others that are not among the major five listed above. It should be noted that the term “Atyap and their neighbours¹⁰” will be used here to refer to the southern Kaduna cultures in

⁸ The data is based on the record of the Kaduna State Ministry of Culture and Tourism according to the Director of Culture, Mrs Deborah Bature (Byang Kato’s daughter), Abdulmumuni Y. Ashafa, the Deputy Director of Planning, Research and Statistics and Emma Akut, Deputy Director of Culture. These groups could be similar or the same in culture, but they are differentiated here in terms of their spoken language, that is, their speech and pronunciations, and also the names of villages or the groups. The “Maguzawa” refers to the real Hausa people who are not originally from southern Kaduna; the same applies to the “Sayawa” and Hausa-Fulani people who are settlers from the northern part of the state and other places in the north.

⁹ Diji refutes James’ assertion that the Ham have an ancestral linkage with Noah’s family in Genesis, and explains that they migrated from Borno to Bauchi-Plateau before they moved to Zangon Kataf and then to their present settlement in the land of Ham.

¹⁰ C. K. Meek, in his book, “*Tribal Studies in Northern Nigeria*” (1978) Volume II., Published at AMS Press, New York first coined the term Kataf (“Atyap and their neighbours”). Neighbours here could be brothers or relatives, as the case may be. In the early times, southern Kaduna people had good relations with one another, and they inter-married and lived together as one family. The term “Atyap and their Neighbours” is used in reference to the people of southern Kaduna because the Atyap are recognized as the earliest settlers in the area. De Silva cites Pitt-Rivers who states that the evaluation of able and disrespectful acts vary between cultures,

general or to their languages some of which are dialects of the major languages in the area. This point will be discussed later in the study.

1.5.6 Stories of the beginning

Stories of the beginning which are also known as creation stories or the stories of human origin in folktales or folklore, myths, legends and any other oral tradition are passed from one generation to the other. In the past, they were meaningful to our ancestors and did benefit them in that they shaped the community and human identity. Since social and traditional institutions and beliefs were important to the people, the stories were narrated not just for entertainment but also for educational reasons, as indicated by the plot, character(s), sequence, time and climax.

1.5.7 “According To”

The use of the term “*according to*” is a reflection of the opinion of a group or person in relation to another. This study will be carried out in relation to the understanding of human dignity in the stories of the beginning in Genesis and of honour and shame in southern Kaduna cultures. The phrase indicates an agreement to convey ideas from one group in comparison to another. It is a relational term but will be use rather as an application terminology to indicate the relationship of a contemporary community with the biblical and to show the beauty of both cultures, then and now in terms of honour and shame.

1.6 Conclusion and Structure of Chapter

One important feature of the southern Kaduna people is the respect they attach to family life which enhances their communal life. As earlier stated, in Africa, stories make up the social and religious lives of the people. A society without a story has no heritage and has no culture or legacy for the younger generation to inherit. As in the ancient Near East, human dignity was defined among the people of southern Kaduna from the stories of the beginning, and from the stories, they developed their concepts of God even before the coming of Christian missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries.

groups and time (De Silva 1996:434). The idea of honour and shame in the stories of the beginning is depicted by certain important elements in Genesis 6:1-4 that can help explain human dignity.

The southern Kaduna people¹¹ share resemblances, as they share the same origin and similar beliefs though they speak different languages and dialects. However, their many similarities are incomparable to their differences especially with regards to their traditional activities, social settings, social life and religion activities including their stories of origin, history and migration. The situation in the area is similar to the various ancient Near Eastern cultures which had so many things in common and understood things from similar perspectives but remained significantly diverse. Similarly, the honour code today is a culture that can be traced from different nook and corners of the world. Its practice is an important one which cannot be studied in isolation; as such, the semantic field of the term is significant for relative and corresponding understanding of this research. Again, this research aims to show the significance of honour and shame as a code of conduct that promotes human dignity in the stories of the beginning from or for different cultures.

The structure is in six chapters, the first chapter focused on the background and methods employed in developing the ideas for the study. The second chapter addresses the semantic fields of honour and shame in order to provide a network or web of the concepts involve. This is followed by a discussion on honour and shame as human dignity in the third chapter, these concepts will be used as a frame of reference to explain the value of human beings from the southern Kaduna perspective. Chapter four investigates the stories of the beginning in Old Testament and southern Kaduna cultures and presents a comparison of how the stories are read and applied in human socio-religious life. In the fifth chapter, an exposition of Genesis 6:1-4 will be carried out in order to retell Old Testament stories and relate them to the southern Kaduna stories. Chapter 6 contains the summary of the findings and the conclusion as well as a recommendation for scholars to reconsider neglected cultures in this area of human dignity research.

¹¹ Hausa language is spoken mostly in several countries in West Africa namely Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, Mali, Ghana, Chad and Niger, etc. The Hausa are a dominant group in Northern Nigeria most of whom are Muslims. However, a sizeable population of Northern Nigerian Hausa are also Christians. A number of minority groups in many parts of northern Nigeria are also under Hausa influence who are predominantly Christians and who do not like to be identified as Hausa. The Atyap (Kataf) and their neighbours are one of such groups. They are among the most persecuted people groups in Northern Nigeria due to religion, because honour and shame is observed based on religion and the Atyap and their neighbours remained stiff and loyal to Christianity. The Hausa Muslims in Northern Nigeria on the contrary believe that anyone who does not practise Islam is a “*kafiri or arne*” infidel, and the worst sinner before Allah (God). A true Muslim should not associate with such and whatever means that can be possibly adopted to persecute them is holiness and honour before Allah. Therefore, it is very difficult for these two groups to co-exist peacefully and live in dignity (in honour), since both of them have different worldviews of what constitute honour and shame before their God.

CHAPTER TWO

SEMANTIC FIELDS OF HONOUR AND SHAME

2.1 Introduction

The code of honour and shame is neither a new perception in most human societies nor a modern invention. It originated from the ancient Mediterranean region in the ancient Near East. However, modern scholars interested in socio-anthropology including Pitt-Rivers, Peristiany, Hagedorn, Malina¹², De Silva, Bajora and a few others have influenced and triggered extensive research in this field in recent times. They locate the honour complex in rural societies where the culture of honour and shame is mostly adhered to and where cultural practices are mostly respected. They emphasize honour as a frame of reference for social hierarchy and as an attribute that the people are born with or attached to, for proper behaviour especially in the family (Horowitz 2005:1009). According to Gruber (2007:520), honour is the most important word in the Talmud, which expresses relationship of mutual respect for dignity to a fellow human being. In secular societies, these kinds of cultures are obscured because they do not really respect a well defined culture.

Honour and shame form a network of concepts which may be relative in meaning depending on the context. The beliefs are not isolated ideas but rather are relative and similar based on perspectives. The use of semantic fields as a method is important in this chapter because the idea of honour and shame can be conceived as the ethics and etiquettes of a society, which is also similar to the law code of the Old Testament. Honour and shame did not emanate from a vacuum but from the socio-religious daily lives of the people in a community. They are initiated by the people for the regulation of daily life in order to achieve “*Zumunci*” or “*Ubuntu*”¹³ for a dignified community. The idea of honour and shame has also been accepted

¹² Bruce J. Malina wrote ‘*Social Science Commentary on the Gospels*’ and other works related to honour and shame.

¹³ *Zumunci* or “*Ubuntu*” is an African philosophy of life initiated by early African scholars like Mbiti, Kato and Idowu which explains the idea of unity and community life as, “we are therefore you are,” meaning that “humanity is only understood in how you relate with other people,” and that “you are a person only in the eyes of others in the society”. The concept of individualism, an idea this thesis is contesting, is foreign to them in the sense that family is defined nuclearly. If the concept of honour and shame as human dignity is to be rekindled and understood in African societies like southern Kaduna, it will go a long way to fight against human indignity or injustice and to unite the people.

as a standard way of checking and balancing the morality of people in many contemporary societies. The question is – why is the use of semantic fields important for this study?

Just as rules and regulations help a community to organize itself, the culture of honour and shame helps people to organize themselves and relate properly in the society. Pitt-Rivers endorses honour and shame as the reciprocal moral value that represents the integration of an individual to a group. Both terms reflect the conferment of a public esteem on a person and sensitivity to the public opinion on which the person is totally dependent upon (Pitt-Rivers 1965:21, 42). In a sense, honour and shame are valued by a group as important components of identity; and from birth people, are socialized to respect and honour an older person or one another in the community for the sake of human dignity. The dignity of human beings has to do with the estimation of the value or the state of regulating shame and honour in humans for the good life in which humans are respected.

It is observed that human beings respond to respect and that it is hierarchical but not in all situations, because there are times when younger people or females are not accorded respect and honour. Human dignity entails considering people in an appropriate way in light of facts about them. For instance, when military men and athletes are honoured with medals and artists are given marks of excellent performance or achievements as in the Coral Award, in a sense, it is not regarded as respect given to a person or an induction of moral values to younger ones. Rather, it is an appreciation of the person's achievement in his/her field, like 'Meritorious service awards' such as the highly popular Nobel Prize are also given to honour individuals in recognition of their contribution to society (Appiah 2010:181-186). It appears that today honour is no longer associated with morality or respect but with achievement and service to humanity.

Thus, the meanings of the key words that are related to honour could clarify the idea seeing that it could be positive or negative. The study of the semantic relationships between words has existed since the introduction of the study of language in ancient times and even in modern languages, it is shown that a single word can take various meanings. The interplay of these words is what we are interested in here, as the semantic fields of the terms honour and shame could help relate words to the idea of human dignity. Since human dignity implies that people are being elevated to the right standard by conduct, it means that it creates the value or

worth of an individual to show the humanity in their relationship. In fact, it is observed that most societies have traces of this culture and notably, any group that has relegated the culture of respect would have confused its younger generation.

2.2 Purpose of the Methodology

The main reason for exploring the semantic field of a word is to help clarify and distinguish its usage, which would also help in applying the meaning in a specific context. A life of honour in southern Kaduna is viewed as an honourable and respectable way of life, in that the lack of it gives one low self-image among the people especially in a context with many ethnic groups and dialects which also share certain similarities. In this research, honour and shame will be seen as a means of enforcing human dignity¹⁴ among the southern Kaduna people and it will be viewed as respect to humanity and the dignity that God ascribed to human beings at creation, based on the stories in Genesis. The question here is how does the issue of honour and shame relate to creation stories in Genesis narratives especially as it is understood in the Old Testament world? Olyan opines that the use of the terminologies is dependent on the context and it must be analysed in their linguistic and social contexts in order to be understood (Olyan 1996:204).

In the context of southern Kaduna, honour and shame are expressed in the form of poetry, prose and religious life, and in other ways such as speech, songs, proverbs, stories and relationships with one another. It is interesting how children gather in the evenings after meals to listen to stories told or narrated by an elderly person. The stories are told to impart knowledge and pass information from one generation to another, thereby preserving history. Closer to the Atyap and their neighbours are the dominant Hausa cultures that exert much influence on the practices of honour and shame among these people groups. The southern Kaduna cultures differ from the Hausa in many ways. They administer discipline¹⁵ to any

¹⁴ The terms honour *kabod* and shame *bosh* are two ancient words with a long history of semantic and lexical variation. However, respect is a keyword in this thesis, is an achievement which is earned from good works as a result of one's input or contribution to the people. The same applies to shame, which at most times lies on the negative performance scale or on the opposite side of honour. Both were bestowed also on the people based on their behaviour and not on their economical contributions in the community.

¹⁵ It is important to raise some aspects of honour and shame in southern Kaduna cultures that relate to human dignity. For example, there is no concept or name for divorce (except polygamy) or homosexuality (that is, for gays and lesbians). They are tagged as a symbol of outright shame, just as rape or incest which are not even to be heard of. Every young man is encouraged to have his/her own wife. A thief is usually excommunicated from the community and his family is shamed. Nonetheless, in cases of disgraceful acts such as drunkenness and

wrongful act but for whatsoever reason, no any form of killing, assassination, butchery, homicide massacre is permitted. It is not so with the dominant Hausa-Fulani Islamic cultures of northern Nigeria who considers people of other religion or culture as objects of death in the name of honour killing. Nevertheless, neighbouring groups may slip into communal clashes though celebrating the death¹⁶ of another in the form of honour is considered unacceptable.

2.3 Purpose of Semantic Fields

It is important to consider first various perspectives on the idea of semantic field. The Oxford English Dictionaries¹⁷ define semantics as a branch of linguistics that deals with the study of the meanings of a word and the changes in the word, that is, the principle that governs the relationship between sentences or words and their meaning. Semantics is also the study of the relationship between signs and symbols, and what they represent or of the logic of interpreting formal theories to determine the truth and falsehood of the sentence. The Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary defines semantics as the description of a language by emphasizing a deep structure that is logical in form, a doctrine, or an educational discipline that is intended to improve the habit of response in human beings.

The Penguin English Dictionary says that semantics focuses on the structure of vocabulary analysis, the way an individual word changes meaning and the relationship of the words to each other. It could also be defined as a branch of semiotics dealing with the relationship between signs and the objects they refer to. The Macquarie Dictionary on the other hand

fighting with one's spouse or relations, certain customs including cleansing rituals are observed to dealing with such evils. The "*Dodo cult*" is one of the places where certain punishments are administered. For example, the affected family could be fined or taxed with heavy duties in the community while others are forced to make vows of chastity after they have pleaded for forgiveness or have undergone the cleansing process. In the case of certain natural phenomena such barrenness, miscarriage, giving birth to only female children, widowhood and death, etc, people are perceived with shame, which does not come from lack of respect. A girl's virginity brings her parents and extended family honour and pride, and they are seen as being responsible. Moreover, a girl who successfully marries as a virgin is honoured and blessed with prayers and gifts for upholding the family name.

¹⁶ A death was classified as good or bad depending on how the person related with people when he/she was alive. Death plays an important role in the society and one is not forgotten because he/she is no more. In fact, every one his death parents because they still have some importance and people strove to live good lives so as to be enlisted among the good ancestors in the future. As noted in the previous chapter, there are over sixty ethnic groups in this region but they differ also in many ways. Gove, P.B. (ed.) 1961. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*. Unabridged. London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd.

¹⁷ Most of the dictionaries were found online at www.credoreference.com and www.sensagent.com. The definition needs to be extensive because exploring the semantic field is the research methodology employed in this chapter.

defines semantics as the linguistic and systematic study of the meaning of words and the changes thereof while the Chambers Dictionary sees it as the reference to the relationship in meaning especially of words and their derivatives. It is a study of the different correlations between meanings of words and the analysis of vocabulary into a series of basic identifying features or components of meaning.

On a wider note, the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary online explains a semantic field as a set of lexically related words in meaning while the Reader's Digest: Oxford Complete Word Finder describes it as the relationship to the connotation of words or words related to meaning in language (Tulloch 1994:1402). Nordquist in About.com shows that it is a set of lexemes related in meaning, while the linguist Adrienne Lehrer in the same place elucidate adds that it is a set of lexemes which covers a certain conceptual domain and which bears certain specific relations to one another (1985). Often, fields are divided by specific subject matters such as culture, body parts, land forms, disease and kinship relationship, such that semantic fields are used to reflect a character or behaviour in a clearer way. Semantic theory in (sensagent.com) shows that the meaning of a word depends on its context and relationship to other words in the same conceptual place.

In a similar way, Tate (2006:331) notes that a semantic field is a lexical method of defining a group of suggested words with common or overlapping meaning. At times, the words are opposites and at some points, they change meaning to become synonyms depending on the context. For VanGemeeren (1997:8), a semantic field is an arrangement of similar words in order to help determine the meaning of a word. It could also be that which provides a structure within which the meaning of a word can be judged or provided. On the other hand, the meaning of the word is congruent with its relationship to other words, which may be synonymous or homonymous.

Thus, studying the "semantic fields" of a word with corresponding meanings especially as it relates to honour or shameful code of conduct is the focus of this chapter. Honour and shame are not only isolated words with different meanings but they are also related to one another depending on is the way they are semantically conceived in different communities/settings. Such relationships are important for emphasis and creativity. It gives a broad perspective of the issues at stake and helps myopic minds to understand how others think by comparing

their beliefs and practices. The relationships between words or their lexical similarities also help in defining the scope of terms from a universal point of view. Understanding the semantic fields of honour and shame from the ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament perspectives is significant at this juncture.

2.4 Semantic Fields of Honour and Shame

Sociologists, anthropologists and theologians have used various terms interchangeably with honour and shame. These concepts are significant in most traditional cultures especially as they are viewed differently. For example, **honour** is synonymous with majesty, reputation, admiration, adornment, splendour, credit, and exalts, tribute; its other noun forms include principle, nobility, pride (not negative pride). Honour is also seen as glory, abundance, privilege, and mark of respect, mark of distinction, award and prize. Its antonyms are insult, dishonour and ignobleness. The idea of the verb is to keep respect, stick to, to reverence (*tehillah*), pay homage to (*hadar*) or venerate, while to break is an antonym of to honour. Peristiany states that honour and shame are two poles of an evaluation, and they are the reflection of the social ideas of a people. What is particular to this evaluation is the use of personality as a standard of measurement in society (Peristiany 1965:9-10). Honour is also an estimation of a person's worth, claim to pride and the acknowledgment of that claim as one's pride is excellently recognized by the society (Gilmore 1987:3).

Shame on the other hand is a feeling or condition associated with humiliation, disgrace and dishonour resulting from laziness, pride, refusing direction, failure to discipline, ignoring custom, defeat and enslavement or paganism. For instance, pagan worship or idolatry was a chief source of shame for God's people in the Bible, and such unfaithfulness led to their humiliation before their enemies (Brown 1990:816). According to Tate (2005:170), honour had to do with not only a person's status in the community but also the recognition of the same status for other members of the same community. Israel suffered national defeat and God took them into exile, exposing their shame.

Pope (1913:771-772) distinguishes between honour and shame thus:

This code is specie of etiquette observed by particular class, trade or profession, thus it belongs to 'minor morals' or 'moral codes' which is not different in the medieval period and our postmodern times. Honour is a high regard felt, given or received; it is a sense of what is due or right. It takes an objective meaning as equivalent to exalted, rank or position as (mark of excellence, distinction or decoration). It could be having a personal or collective

recognition of self as a member of a society; it could be a conjugal fidelity to honour a wife or husband. Honour is ideal self-preservation of the development of self-consciousness; while shame is the guardian of honour this implies that there is always a context between moral concepts and social behaviour.

Furthermore, **shame** *bosh* is synonymous with disgrace *boseth*, embarrassment *herpa*, humiliation, indignity, ignominy, infamy, and pride is its antonym. In the verb form, shame is similar to mortify, make uncomfortable, humiliate or embarrass. Other verb forms include discredit *qalon*, dishonour, degrade, bring into disrepute, defamed and given a bad name or bring shame on, while the antonym is honour. Shame is the humiliation one gets from the community as a result of a character or a group's negative behaviour. From a similar understanding of both words, meaning-making is more than mere looking at a word; its interpretation depends on the context as shown in the following statement":

Shame is an emotion of self-abasement, experienced by one who is conscious of social norms and doesn't like to act contrary to or below the standards of the society which are approved for making judgment. It is related to a state that is confused with modesty, shyness and coyness which is marked by hesitation caution and inhibition. They arise under a consciousness of being under the gaze of others whose attitude is curiosity, superiority or criticism. It also involves the sense of unworthiness and demerit which is connected to sex as a consciousness of failure and being exposed before others. It is a self-imposed retributive punishment that points to injury. Social psychologists emphasize that one's social group furnishes the determining influence in informing an individual of taste and conduct in the society (Ames 1920:446-447).

The influence of honour and shame is closely connected to the public and private realms of life. Honour is a quality expressed in public and contested there. It has to do with gender, as women were required to remain virgins for the purpose of chastity and honour while men's seduction was seen as prudent sexuality, such that chastity became the mark of an honourable woman in the society, a hero or a wise person as the wisdom woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 (Horowitz 2005:1010). Shame in many instances is a grading that sets one below the standard and that is why an action must be taken afterwards to regain one's glory or pride. Shaming comes automatically as a result of a person's failure to live up to the standard or to keep the ethics of the community. Shame often makes people around a person to withdraw their relationship with such a person in order for him/her not stain their character or make the relationships sour (De Silva 2008:287-288).

In my opinion, the code of honour and shame was a major indication of knowing the right actions to take in a society, which implies a certain system of reciprocal right and obligations.

It means dignity is bestowed on human beings as a result of an achievement or the demonstration of excellence by a person or group. The conduct of a man's honour or shame is regulated by social blames in a circle where we belong or the larger world that influences the individual. The idea of honour and shame is being used by anthropologists, sociologist and theologians to study the belief systems and reasoning ability of various people. Consequently, the concept of honour dictate the manner in which a person interconnects in public whether as superior, inferior or equal with others.

2.5 Semantic Field for Honour and Shame in the Ancient Near East

The root *kbd* appears as constituents of personal names in most Semitic languages referring to physical features such as *kabittu*, *kabbutum*, *kubbutum* meaning 'the heavy one'. It appears occasionally in names such as *issukabiit* "his strength is weighty" which expresses a lament to a deity and in a sense alluded to in human society, as in *kabtaat anahawirisa* "she is honoured by her spouse". Honour is also rendered as *kabed*, *kobed*, *kebudda* or *kebudut*, and in other languages *kabod* is rendered *kabatu* or *kabda* (Dohmen 1995:13-15). The verb *kbd* may also apply to anything that weighs down human life such as guilt or sin, misfortune, or disaster which can burden or oppress the individual (Steinmans 1995:17-18). Dohmen (1995:13-17) explains that the root *kbd* has various meanings, probably because of the meanings of the word in different contexts but there are instances of overlaps also in the usage of the words. He adds that the Akk. word *kabatu* also means "to be heavy". He compare the word *wdn* in Egyptian which also means "to be heavy" or "burdened" not in the sense of physical weight but figuratively in terms of an illness that burdens "parts of the body", burden as the "operating power of the king", "good or bad qualities" meaning "weight". According to Weinfeld, the expression is used for deities, kings or awesome sacred objects and itself as an object of "worship", "reverence" and "fear" *pulhu*. For example, the "fear" *melammu* and the "glory" of the Assyrian god or king help to overcome *ishupsunuti* the enemy in battle (Weinfeld 1995:31).

The verb *bosh* ranges in meaning and expression and sometimes occurs with an adjective or subjective character *klm*, "to be humiliated". Originally, "to be injured" *hpr* is "to feel shame", *htt* is "to be shattered" or "disarrayed", while *hwr* means "to turn pale". The second form constructed almost exclusively on the analogy of the initial (*waw yod*) verb has an inner transitive meaning and is distinct from "to wither" *ybs*. Others are "to treat disgracefully" or

“to shame”. The subjective aspect plays a minor role in the religious usage of the word. The objective aspect is used in the lament of the enemy, the supplication laid claims to help from a supreme deity and protection from destruction, and because the enemy could not expect this, he/she is abandoned to annihilation¹⁸. Baal is called *boseth* and *melek* and is vocalized on the same model as these gods who are the powers deeply hostile to Yahweh (Stolz 1997:204-207). In a real sense, they feared Yahweh, and believed in his abilities.

In the ancient Near East, defeating people in war and making them prisoners was a way of dehumanizing¹⁹ them and removing their pride. It was also a way of exposing them to mockery, disgrace and scorn or humiliation *herpa* and *kelima* (Nel 1997:624). Shame is not always negative; it can also be positive especially when a person deliberately keeps away from some people or from evil in order to earn respect and dignify him/herself. Shame is also modesty expressed in the sense of watching over one’s private inward sphere or identity and integrity, while dignity is portrayed to protect oneself or prevent intruders in one’s private affairs, leading to positive shame (Wurmser 2005:940-941). This sense of shame from personal point of view is widespread among women in the southern Kaduna cultures.

De Vries (1962:305-306) notes in addition that shame *bosh* and other derivatives of it can also be seen as reproach, sexual shame, humiliation, nakedness, misgiving or holding up to public disregard. These are all painful consciousness of guilt, failure and unworthiness of an individual in his community and before God which could be caused by a natural calamity such as barrenness, widowhood or a painful form of disgrace, etc. Shame could also come as divine judgment on the disobedient or sinner, and the shame of the wicked comes when the faithful progresses. Downing (2009:212) shows that shame constitutes the flipside of the pivotal Mediterranean value (honour), and men would do everything to avoid shame or the loss of honour.

Shame *bosh* refers to both emotion and basic disposition, being afraid of exposure and humiliation, a form of anxiety. It can also occur as a complex reference to a depressive

¹⁸ The prophets probably borrowed this concept from the cults and used it in their prophecies of judgment to foreign nations or to Israel for the promise of salvation of the land.

¹⁹ In the early biblical times, a patriarch could surrender his wife to safeguard his life and avoid shame. For example, Sarah suffered disgrace on account of her infertility and Hagar’s pride or honour was her ability to bear a son. A similar thing happened when Leah bore children for Jacob. The rape of Dinah in Gen. 34 was an example of shame. The lament of Israel was an indication that David’s removal as king brought shame and ridicule to the land; but this came on them because of their failure to live up to divine expectation.

feeling. This is a psychological effect on a person and leads him/her to take decisions that exclude him from others or from societal activities. On the contrary, one could be ashamed to keep oneself from being the object of gossip and jealousy in order to build up respect for oneself and an honourable character of peace, reverence and social respect (Wurmser 2005:940).

The various settings of the languages of the ancient Near East as initiated by Finegan (1989) and adapted for this study are displayed below.

Fig. 1-A Chart of the Ancient Near Eastern Cultures and Languages (Adapted from Finegan 1989:21)

Non-Semitic	Semitic	Semitic	Semitic
	<i>Northeast</i>	<i>Northwest</i>	<i>Southwest</i>
Sumerian	Akkadian Babylonian Assyrian (Grouped as Assyro-Babylonian)	Canaanite Ugaritic Amorite Hebrew Phoenician Aramaic Syriac	Arabic Ethiopic
Egyptian			

The settings of the ancient Near East languages will be expounded in what follows.

2.5.1 North East Semitic cultures

In the ancient world, majesty, honour and glory depicted reverence and respect in various ways. For example, the terrifying manifestation of *Inanna* in Mesopotamian literature is quite striking, and in the Sumerian hymn of *Enheduanna* to *Inanna*, the terrible countenance was that of the goddess which beamed radiance. Another instance is the terrifying glory of *Inanna* which caused the *Anunna* deities to flee to the rocky clefts. According to Finegan (1989:31):

Mesopotamia constitutes the matrix of ANE cultures which is the birth place of human civilization. The north-west Semitic languages adopted most of their writing skills from the ancient Mesopotamia and Sumerians in the 3rd millennium BCE. Mesopotamian civilization

was as early as 3500BC, born in the valley between Tigris and Euphrates rivers with the inhabitants as the Sumerians. It was historically sensitive to cultures and governed by the assembly of gods whose human stewards were kings. They had rich mythological beliefs and legacies which included the creation myth of *Enuma Elish*, the Gilgamesh.

Finegan further notes that the Semitic people differed from the Sumerians, had various sub-languages and peoples such as the Akkadian, Assyrian and Babylonians who belonged to the older east Semitic branch while the Hebrew, Aramaic, Phoenician, Syriac, Ethiopian and Arabian people belonged to the western branch. The place was later referred to as Babylon and as modern day Iraq-Iran region. Finegan explains that it is in the myths and epic tales of the people that we learn of the acts of the gods and also discern some of the major topics in the Mesopotamian religious thought. Their teachings mostly focused on creation, the universe and humankind, as well as the great flood and the problems of death due to time.

During the first century of the third millennium, history indicates that Sumerian influence was felt predominantly around the southern region while the north was mostly occupied by Semitic Akkadian. In 2300 BCE, the two regions became united under the Akkadian king Sargon I who replaced the Sumerian city-states with the Akkadian governors in the south. The people spoke Akkadian and Sumerian literature enjoyed a brief revival during this era until around the end of the third millennium BCE when the Summer-Akkadian culture advanced in Mesopotamia in the areas of literature, economics, religion and art. An Assyro-Babylonian kingdom took over, and in 539 BCE, Persia captured Babylon and changed the language to Greek; it was the last native Semitic empire of ancient Mesopotamia (Arnold 2009:54-57).

2.5.1.1 Assyro-Babylonian

Assyro-Babylonia was made up of the Mesopotamian kingdoms which exerted profound cultural influence on Israel and destroyed its independence. Babylon²⁰ attained honour in the second millennium while Assyria became politically significant in the second half of the second millennium. The third millennium was the era of cultures in the lands of Sumer and Akkad where Sumerian was spoken as a non-Semitic language. The Semitic invaders were the Hyksos, the rulers of foreign lands who ruled Egypt. In Babylon, the Kassite dynasty was replaced by the second dynasty of the Isin and Babylon gained power because of a weak leader Ashur-resh-ishi. The vigorous Babylonian leader Nebuchadnezzar I (1126-1105 BC)

²⁰ The Babylonian ruler Hammurabi was a famous lawgiver and military genius who was also a great administrator of that time and whose laws were closely connected to the Hebrew laws (Kitagawa 1990:19).

ruled the land and made peace with Assyria after its defeat. It was at that time that the statue of Marduk was restored to Babylon and was probably the period of Marduk's prophecy when the cultic rites of Babylon were also restored (Robert 2006:313-320).

2.5.2 North-West Semitic cultures

Several languages made up the north-west Semitic languages but most of them were under Mesopotamian influence.

2.5.2.1 Canaanite

The Canaanites dwelt along the eastern Mediterranean coastal areas approximating the modern state of Lebanon and Israel and parts of Syria. They spoke Hebrew but had problematic linguistic equations between the Habiru and the Hebrew languages. The region was a place of promise as well as a land of corrupt cultures. It also related to the Phoenicians of the Iron Age and the later Canaanite cultures of the middle and late Bronze Age. The term Canaanite religion is a modern category which places a variety of cults and beliefs of the region together. The Canaanites worshipped several deities (they were polytheistic) including Baal, and theirs was a religion of images. The rejection of these cultures and religion by Israel can be seen in the ancestral stories in Genesis. Kinship was an important marker of the social relationships among the Canaanites and their various neighbours (Dearman 2006:532-535).

2.5.2.2 Ugaritic

In Ugarit, shame denotes the feeling of rebuke when behaviour exceeds the expected norms of conduct. Subjectively, it is an experience of rejection or disgrace and objectively, it means that an individual is instrumental to bringing shame to the society. In societies with strong group orientation, the idea of honour and shame serves as a control over indecent behaviours. This is visible in the judicial, political and social contexts of ancient Israel (Nel 1997:624). In Ugaritic, the word *kbd* means "to honour"; in another sense, it means "to be weighty". In the administrative text from Ugar, the adjective *kbd* appears in descriptive apposition to the *shekel*, stating qualities of metals, wool or textiles. It designates a 'heavier weight' indicating similarities or the simultaneous use of a different system of weights (Dohmen 1995:14). The sacrificial cult of the Ugaritic presents the king as the principal ritual actor along with the priest who was seen as the holy one. The sacrifice was lunar in its calendar, and one of the rituals included the offering at the beginning of the fall which corresponded to the Israelite's New Year and the festivals of Booths or Tabernacles. They also had temples for rituals and

had garments for their priests which were worn also by the deities. The Ba'al cycle is Ugaritic's longest text, and it was written in shorter alphabets similar to Hebrew and Aramaic but it showed similarities with Egyptian religions (Smith 2009:701-702). The southern Kaduna cultures also have similar honour festivals which will be considered later in the study.

2.5.2.3 Phoenician

The Phoenicians who dwelt around Lebanon and the Mediterranean Sea were well known for their purple dye industry and were popular referred to as the people of the Phoenicia. Their history dated back to the third millennium and they were blessed with fertile land for agriculture, rivers and vast forests. Between the late Bronze and the Early Iron Age periods, they were known for the radical social disintegration in their community. In the second half of the ninth century, the Phoenician god came on the scene and they had priests who administered their cultic rituals and sacrifices. They paid taxes and tributes to the Assyrian monarch for protection. The "lady at the window" in some of their images could have been their sacred goddess prostitute, Astarte who was also related to Ishtar. Female heads with heavy wigs on them were always used for such statues (Doumet-Serhal 2009:517-519). These also contributed to the honour-shame culture.

2.5.2.4 Aramaean

The root *kbd* is widely attested in the Semitic language family and it means 'heavy'. The Aramaic apparently uses the word *yqr* as difficult or precious where the Hebrew uses the word *kbd*. The working meaning is 'weight' while others serve as applications but the word 'heavy' for *kbd* is also used concurrently. The idea of giving wealth, glory and honour to a deity refers to giving religious homage as in public worship, but honouring false gods in public was regarded a great shame and disobedience. Dignity with God means to conceal things from humans while dignity for kings is to be crowned, to rule and to search for the meaning of life (Collins 1997:577-579). In Aramaic, the verb occurs as *bht*, that is, "to feel ashamed", *bosh* is "to be ashamed" or to "behave shamefully". It is similar to *bws*, *busa*, *bosna*, *boset* shamefulness, disgrace, an expression of a feeling of embarrassment, rejection or abandonment by a friend or somebody superior in a position or a deity. The term *boset* is used to refer to the quality of one's personality (dignity), and the pride of a person or city, and not to sexual organs (Nel 1997:624). The context of a word helps to define the meaning of the word, especially as it pertains to translation and application.

2.5.3. South-West Semitic culture - Arabian²¹

The term Arab *Arav* is a designation of sedimentary cultures and urban dwellers, driven from the desert and therefore known as the people of the desert. They were also called the people of the east or desert dwellers and later Arabs, from the territory of the present day Iran to Egypt and then to Mesopotamia. In most ancient Near Eastern cultures, there is certainty that the tribal society and confederations of the Arabs dated to the ninth century nomads. The land had a culture of wars and believed in their god Allah. The Arabic language was quite a later development among other north-west Semitic languages, but it also had ample trace of honour and shame cultures, because as at the time of its appearance, civilization had emerged (Graf 2006:211-220). This is also the ancient society of the Islamic faith and the place where Jihad originated, in this culture they take notice of behaviours that leads to honour or shame.

2.5.4 Non-Semitic cultures

The section will examine briefly two of the non-Semitic cultures namely Sumerians and Egyptians.

2.5.4.1 Sumerian²²

The Sumerians were an advanced group in the ancient Near East early in the third millennium. In 3000 BCE, they marked language with syllables, symbols and signs as part of

²¹ Arabic is a Southwest Semitic language in the same family with Ethiopic language, though it is a later development to Sumerian and Northeast Semitic languages.

²² Akkadian is an umbrella term for Mesopotamian languages. It clarifies that *kbd* is “heavy” meaning the most important, and “weight” is honour or majesty. The expanded meaning of *kabattu* or *kabttu* could be “interior or the mind” and *yqr* is “worth, precious or valuable”, but the (*qal*) form means “to be difficult” while the (*hi*) form is “to make precious”. It is only in few passages that *kbd* means “heavy in weight” which does not give objective information, but the actual *kbd* means “weight as burden just as its function in the burden of taxing people”. The weight could be positive or negatively understood; the primitive people had negative understanding as burden on the body as a form of yoke (sin, guilt, and task). Heaviness could be wealth; the (*pi*) form of *kbd* is “to acknowledge someone’s weight” (Westermann 1997:590-593). The root does not convey double sense of heaviness as in physical weight or weightiness but on the contrary. Again, in Akk *kabattu* is the realm of violent, emotion and blind passion just as *libbu* which denotes “sentiments” and the “manifestation of moral and intellectual life”. The term *kbd* is often parallel with *lb* as a seat of feeling and emotion; for instance, “her liver swells with laughter,” or “her heart is filled with joy,” and among the Canaanites, names like *kbd* are found as elements of Ugaritic and Semitic cultures (Dohmen 1995:14-15). Shame *bosh* on the other hand could be opposite considerations of honour, a character that devalues and reduces the respect that should be accorded to a person. Other forms of ‘to put to shame’ include *bushat*, *boseth*, *mebhushim*. In Ugaritic and Akkadian, certain parallels of the word exist. In Akk., the term *basuni* has its derivatives as *bustum*, *bayyisu* and *ayyabas*, as in, “I will not put you to shame” but *basu* is “to come to shame” and in Akk., it is the exposure to a situation of shame. Another word with corresponding meaning to *bustum* is *bosheth*, probably to disgrace or to shame in the negative, and *bustum* is not in Heb. The term *bustum* is that which injures, as to loss of dignity, (*bosh*) here is to be disgraced for something that happened (Seebass 1975:50-60).

their identity. They lived in towns and villages as farmers and animal keepers, and theirs was a hierarchical society with priests, scribes, merchants and craftsmen who subscribed to law and order. Women were only partly involved in this setting as men played the dominant roles in the society. Their major deity was *Temeos*. It was a complex but organized society with an advanced culture when compared to the cultures of their time. Kings, judges, priests and scribes also took the lead in their administrative activities. The Sumerian text was probably the oldest written text (Crawford 2009:395-401).

2.5.4.2 Egyptian

Ancient Egypt was defined by the Nile and it was one group in the ancient Near East that kept its historical records carefully. One is tempted to believe that the culture of honour and shame emanated from them to the Jews:

They practiced a polytheistic religion like the Canaanites who associated deities to everything in life including the sun, moon, stars, skies, death, earth, childbirth, illness and they had patron god. Each god has its iconography like in animal forms or mix creatures, as such their worship was syncretic they had even (family gods). Most of these gods were worshipped around the Nile basin, in shrines and later temples with priests who offered sacrifices. It was in this context that the creation stories or mythologies arose, like Re the honourable Egyptian god had his creation myth. He was a glorified deity; they sang songs too in adoring him and for showing respect. They believed also in ancestors and reincarnation (Higginbotham 2007:218-2119).

Glory and honour were bestowed on kings and gods, as they were often described as being surrounded with glory and crowned in majesty. Weinfeld (1995:29-30) explains that in Egypt, the crown had particular powers to adorn with glory and represent a gleaming fiery diadem which was considered a part of the awe that overthrew the enemy. The throne was also a sign of honour, losing it during war or captivity to a foreign nation was a terrible blow not only to the palace but also to the whole community. The symbol of kingship was a point of pride; therefore, the society made it a duty to protect the king even if all died in the process because he was a higher human compared almost to God and to an extent worshipped, dignified or honoured as a god in some places. The same word *kabod* stands for “liver” (as an organ), as seen from liver models unearthed by excavation in Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. It can denote the interior of the body, in which case, it resembles the heart and some important internal organs. In Semitic psychology, that is seen as the seat of human will and emotion and the place of decision taking.

2.5.5 Later ancient sources

This section addresses different sources that also found their origins at the ancient times.

2.5.5.1 Greek

The Greek epic also associated divine radiance with the heads of the gods; for instance, Athena with a cloud of fiery power crowned the head of Achilles with power that terrified the Trojans. Zeus' incense could recall the picture of the God²³ of Israel in a thick cloud of smoke above the ark. The LXX NT used the term *doxa* or glory²⁴ which is translated in Hebrew as *kbd*, and it is interesting that *doxa* translates into several words such as reputation, honour, brightness,, power, presence, nobility while the word *hod* is rendered as majesty, *hadar* splendour, beauty, dignity, all of which influence the use of *doxa*. Another term *timao* is translated as time, honour and esteem, and it is used for financial obligation to old people, widows and orphans to mean support or weight, to the glory of God (Collins 1997:586).

2.5.5.2 Qumran Scrolls

The word *kabod* occurs 112xs in Qumran texts and almost half of the appearances are in the 1QH. In the manner of discipline, *kabod* is rear in the regulatory passage 1QSa 2:14-21 which states that the “seating arrangement depends on the *kabod* of the individual”. Most occurrences are in the hymnic section where “God is extolled as the height of *kabod*,” as in 1Qs 10:12. The Semitic richness of *kabod* in the Old Testament Psalms continues in the *hodayoth*. The translation as victory, strength and army proposed by Manahem Mansoor, are dubious since they are based on the parallelism with the *hayil* and *gebura* found in the Old Testament. God is *melek kabod* in 1Qm12:8, 19:7 and 1Qm12:10, 19:3, his *emet kabod* 1QH3:34 or his (*kabod*) is beyond measure (5:20; 19:7). Their community is established *le kabod* by God (8:5, 20) just as the meaning of each individual life is (*le kabod*) by God (1:10; 10:11; cf. Weinfeld 1995:37-38). There was also an early rabbinic literature which was rooted in the Old Testament as an already existing emphasis of the Jewish Bible but the focus here is only on the Old Testament, and this is to show the creation order.

2.5.5.3 Talmud

The Talmud employs *kavod* to show every aspect of the relationship that calls for respect from an inferior to a superior and also among peers. The word *kavod* is used to show that the

²³ Lev.16:2, 13; Exod. 16:10.

²⁴ Jesus for instance is the *doxa* of God, an imagery used “for gazing into the manifold presence of Yahweh”.

most desirable relationship is one of mutual respect of the dignity²⁵ of one's fellow humans. It is a general rule to give respect or honour to one who is greater. It is an emphasis on the hierarchy of respect. The Talmud is a major religious and national achievement of the Jews and remains a fruitful, spiritual and moral force in their lives. It is used for the interpretation and the explanation of concepts (Epstein 1962:513-515).

It is clear from a personal point of view that the idea of honour and shame was obviously connected to the Jewish kingship system which at times flowed through the blood of the family into the clan, affecting the entire community. Their kings sat on stools like gods on the earth making judgments about right and wrong among the people, and to an extent, they were being worshipped. It is also believed that they did not make mistakes as initiators and custodians of the law, but their words were final when it came to the question of observing the people's behaviours. Their activities were all centred on respect and the recognition of human hierarchy in their locality in order to distinguish people according to their levels. Titles were bestowed as marks of honour to people. Unconsciously, this hierarchy inclined the human mind towards order and the need to honour the edicts of the king. Honour and shame were not just observed in behaviours but also in the hierarchy of the institutions in place in the society.

2.6 Honour and Shame in the Old Testament

Honour could be termed variously as weight, *kavod* or *yekar*, *yeqar*, as height *gedullah*, *ga'on*, strength *hodi*, *oz*, *hayil*, beauty *hadar*, *tif'eret*, or praise *tehillah*. It is also conceived as crown or garment in Job 19:9 and Psalms 8:6; 104:1. It could be conferred symbolically on a person (I Sam. 18:4; Esth. 6:7-8) or rescinded by symbols (Hos. 2:5). In Job 29:11, charity

²⁵ Honour was always given not demanded, and in the Talmud, *gedullah* is the word for "greatness," not *kavod*. The rabbis were censorious against a person who achieved honour at the expense of the shame of his fellow human. Whoever did so have no place in the future kingdom! It was always said that *ha-kanah* attributed his old age to the fact that he had never been guilty of this fault in a proverb as "it is not the position that humankind occupies that brings honour rather mankind (*sic*) honours the place or position they occupy" (Gale Virtual Reference 2007. Kater Publishing House Ltd, www.go.galegroup.com). These emphases are already rooted in the Old Testament. The term *musar* is used in Modern Hebrew to explain "morality" which prescribes the way people ought to behave as good and desirable for human beings. Ultimately, it is to rebuke or chastise but the Bible and rabbinic literatures already contain these moral codes. Certain words are used in Lev. 19 to explain the relationship between family members, old and young, rich and poor, employer and employee, men and women, ruler and the ruled. It is proper for humans who were created in God's image to imitate God (Gen. 18:19). Rabbi Akiva and Abbahu both considered the mystery of creation as God's dealing with humankind and refuted the Gnostic heresies. They believe God wanted human beings to continue with the creative act after he had finished the physical, but humankind perished in the flood and at Babel. The Kabbalah or Jewish mystical tradition believes that there can be no knowledge of God without a relationship with the creator because God is invisible (www.credoreference.com/ethics).

and justice earn honour while wisdom in 28:28 is rewarded by honour. Morality honours God (Mic. 6:8), while the faithful are honoured and the disobedient are shamed (Ps. 91:15; Lam. 5:16). Honour could be demonstrated with a standing ovation, by prostrating (Gen. 18:2), in silence (Job 29:9-10; Hab. 2:20), by shouting to the Lord (Ps. 98:4; 100:1) and by rendering worship to a divine deity (Gruber 2007: 519-520).

In Leviticus 19:14, 16, the honour or shame of a fellow Israelite was significant and to be reflected. Thus, to promote social cohesion, one was not to slander a fellow Israelite or mock a handicapped person. The word *kalma* is a verb used 40 times in the Old Testament and is synonymous to (*bosh*) in the sense of being ashamed or disgraced (Num. 12:14, I Sam. 10:5, 19:3, Ezek.16:54). It also means to be conscience stricken as a result of the neglect of Yahweh's laws (II Chron. 30:15, Ezra 9:6). However, *bushnah* is a rare noun derived from *bosh* in Hosea 10:6 which refer to the shame of Israel's sinfulness. The word *kelima* is also another noun from *kalma* which appears about 30 times in the Old Testament and meant disgrace, shame of something or of disgrace (Ps. 4:2; Isah. 45:16; 50:6; Jer. 20:11 and Ezek. 32:2). The shame is in the sense of humiliation; because Israel put her trust in foolish Egypt, she was disgraced (Isah. 30:3). Again, there was the shame that followed the realization of a person's shortcoming (Ps. 44:15; 69:19; Jer. 3:25; 51:51; Ezek. 36:6). In Harrelson's opinion, the word,

... *kavod* is often associated with glory from greatness or dignity, and synonymously taken as weight, splendour, majesty and value. In Old Testament the term refers to a person with high position in the community, possession of valour, prosperity, wisdom and mostly associated to a male. At times it is alternated or used concurrently with glory, splendour and majesty depending on the Bible translator. It is also connected with justice, righteousness and peace as key terms in the covenant vocabularies in the Old Testament (Harrelson 1962:639).

Honour goes with dignity to a person or group being acknowledged. God, kings and people of high status or authority received (*kabod*), as in God of (*kabod*), king of (*kabod*), his kingdom is of (*kabod*) and (*hadar*) splendour, and all (*kabod*) praise should be given to Yahweh not to images or idols (Isah. 42:8; 48:11), and Jeremiah 2:11 says my people have change their *kabod*. It was a confessional experience for the people to forsake their evil and a plea to cling to God (Mal. 1:6). Likewise, parents and masters of slaves received *kabod* in which case, it was personalized as dignity attained by proper conduct, restrain, generosity and

humility. At times, it meant glory, power, beauty or splendour and applied to God, his city or God²⁶ appearing in his sanctuary (Weinfeld 1995:26-27).

Semantically, honour *kbd* means to be heavy, honoured with weighty regard, and its adjective is *kaved*, *kebedut* but it can also be rendered as *kavod* or *kabod*, that is, abundance, honour or glorious and wealthy. The term *kabed* may also be translated literally as heaviness, as in Moses' tired or heavy hands while he was praying on the mountain (Exod. 17:12), Eli's weight or size (I Sam. 4:18), and Absalom's hair (II Sam. 14:26). It is like a yoke or burden on someone. In an abstract sense, the word heavy carries the idea of grievousness or seriousness. In this sense also, Eli honoured his sons, but in the negative. Unresponsiveness is not performing the expected functions as in the heart of Pharaoh (Exod. 7:14; 10:1) which was hardened when he refused to repent or listen to God. Honour can also be prestige or heavy (*kabod*). Israel and David honoured Benaiah (II Sam. 23:23) and honourable and glorious things are said about Zion in Psalm 87:3 (Collins 1994:577-587).

The root *kbd* denotes the guilt a person feels or should feel for having sinned against God (Jer. 2:26), but it could also connote the disgrace one finds in failure, either by actively having done something wrong or failed to do something right (Prov. 14:34). The Old Testament writer did believe that there should be a natural sense of disrepute and unworthiness when one fails to achieve something or one fails a friend. It was considered appalling when the sense of shame was no longer felt (Job 19:3; Jer. 6:15; cf. (Eifird 1989:1003). On the human level, shame could describe an unsuccessful plan by one who plans the breakdown of an "ecstatic existence" (Gen. 2:25). Furthermore, it could cover or conceal one's weakness, whereas the feeling of guilt as an expression of shame imposes a restriction on strength (Seebass 1975:52-53).

Simkins (2000:603-604) considers honour or shame as a psychological state of a person's internal moral character or the action that reflects that character. According to him, honour

²⁶ The Old Testament talks about the radiant face of Moses before God due to the glory of God. We see the terrifying aspect of Yahweh's *kabod* revealed at Sinai but also when the people became alarmed at seeing the fire in the tabernacle and at Solomon's temple dedication. The people rejoiced for the evidence of consuming fire which descended on their sacrifice, and they rejoiced also at Mount Carmel when Elijah called down fire from heaven to consume the sacrifice. The term *kabod* is described as terrible fire, terrible in glorious deeds or deeds of honour or the majesty of Yahweh (Weinfeld 1995:29-31).

and shame are social virtues that determine a person's identity and social status. Honour has to do with a person's self-worth and social acknowledgement –his public reputation, while shame is a person's concern for reputation, a value one seeks to maintain or protect honour. Thus, honour and shame could be individual or collective because a person's honour or shame is dependent upon his family, village, class, state and other factors. It could be ascribed or achieved, bestowed or earned, though some people continue to strive to acquire honour. Renn points out that God sent shame when his people disobeyed or sinned, or when they prioritized their idols above Yahweh (Ps 44: 7; 53:5; Isah. 44:11; Jer. 15:9; 51:47; Ezek. 16:52; Hos. 4:19). At times, he destroyed their enemies to bring honour to himself and avert shame from his people (Ps. 25:2, 31:1, 119:31). In Joel 2:26, God promised not to put his people to shame again or to send them again into exile (Prov. 12:4; 14:35). Additionally, *boshet* is a noun from *bosh* meaning shame in the sense of disgrace; a moral sense of it is indicated in several passages (I Sam. 20:30; I Chron. 32:21; Ezra 9:7; Ps. 40:15; Isah. 30:5; Jer. 3:25; see Renn 2006:886-887). For De Silva (2005:432),

Honour and shame function as important social sanction of promoting behaviour that contributes to strong family ties and an orderly society and rejects behaviour that weakens or degrades the family ties, undermines the hierarchy and disrupts social expectation. Knowing the person to honour and the art of honouring was essential foundation to giving glory to God, his due weight through careful observation of the law. It functions in the physical body and social life of the people. As early as the creation story its readers were taught to associate nakedness with 'shame,' the feeling of vulnerability to inspect that makes urgent need to hide oneself (Gen. 3:8-10) or cover oneself as God did (Gen. 3:21) the shame in the story came as a result of the disobedience of mankind (Gen. 2:25, 3:7), the consequences came on them just as it is done in the cultural communities. Loss of senses is also shameful, as Noah's sons detested and covered their eyes (Gen. 9:20-27).

It can be established from various points of views that honour and shame serve as social virtue for humans in terms of respect for one another and the value they confer on themselves and other creatures. The idea is embedded in the form of a code in the society, that is, a code of instruction to the people. It means a heavy burden or an important responsibility, conferred on or delegated to a person; it could also be seen as difficulty, weight of battle – physical or mental. It is an inner ability seen as self-image/esteem (or shame) while superficially it is the life force of the community which is to protect by checking excessive behaviour; these are necessary elements of honour and shame for a community to be regarded high in relation to its neighbours. In the examples below, honour and shame are depicted in different ways at different eras in the Jewish history.

2.7. Examples of Honour and Shame in the Hebrew Bible

(a) In the *Pentateuch*, honour and shame is depicted in the story of Dinah the daughter of Jacob who was raped by a prince of Shechem in Genesis 34:1-31. Verses 2-3 show that she was seized and raped or humbled (a shameful act) by a prince who should have been a good example. The rape was both sin and shame (dis-virginity, shame and disgrace). It was done by force without her consent. His father the king was also put to shame before his subjects because his son had done evil in the sight of the community. Jacob was filled with sorrow when he heard this but kept quiet waiting for his sons to come back home (probably to fight back and regain their sister's dignity and honour). In vs. 3, the boy is said to love Dinah more than ever before, so he quickly went to his father to inform him that he would like to marry Dinah. This was probably to conceal their honour and to establish unity among them. The girl and her family were also happy to hear this but the sons of Jacob only answered deceitfully, for they could not give their sister to a pagan who was not circumcised (vs.14). It would be a shame and disgrace to do so. Therefore, they gave the sons of Shechem a condition –they should all undergo circumcision in their land, then the marriage could take place (honour). Verse 19 shows that the boy was respected at home, but now he had brought shame to his people. In vs. 25, Dinah's brothers raided the boy's community and killed every male child because their sister was treated like a harlot (vs.31). This was negative honour, as the sons of Israel killed to regain their honour (Westermann 1987:235-241).

(b) In the *historical narratives*, the story of David and Bathsheba (II Sam. 11:1-5) is another example of an honourable king who fell into shame. In the days when kings were honoured for going to war, David was walking on the roof of his palace when he suddenly saw a beautiful woman bathing. Seeing her nakedness was a shameful act in itself. In vv. 3-4, he sent for her and she respectfully came not knowing why the king wanted to see her; but he slept with her (abomination/shame). King David who was regarded as an honourable “man after God's own heart” committed a shameful act. Unfortunately Bathsheba became pregnant, and in order to conceal his sin and shame, David made Uriah who came from the battlefield where he was fighting to protect the ark of God drunk and sent him to sleep with his wife. Uriah refused to do so. The sin of the king automatically became a community shame. Bathsheba's child later died, and David wept and pleaded for forgiveness. The mistake he made was to cover his shame and add murder to adultery (Oden 2005:355-356).

(c) In *Wisdom literature*, the imagery of a woman was used in Proverbs to depict honour and shame. The purpose was to instruct people especially youths to avoid behaviour that could lead to disgrace but rather encourage behaviour that could promote human dignity. Another is the use of the word, vanity in Ecclesiastes, which points people to the vanity of the material world versus the benefits of heavenly blessing in building up honourable behaviour. In Job, we see the philosophy of cause and effect. A woman's virginity brought her honour and social worth, her family is also praised, and the man who marries her is honoured. A person's honour tends to affect the entire social web from family to clan to tribe and to the whole community. Again, the ability or inability to bear children was another essential element of honour to the married woman because it could build or mar her pride, as the case may be (De Silva 2003:434).

Proverbs 31:10-31 presents the courageous, virtuous and noble *hayil* woman, who is also called the wisdom woman. In vs.10, the woman is depicted as having strength and power but the poem also points to the significance, price and value of wisdom. Metaphorically, Woman Wisdom versus Dame Folly represents the idea of honour and shame. Shame, failure and disgrace follow the man who sticks to the advice of the woman of folly. Young men are advised to stay away from her because her aim is destruction, and association with her teaches laziness and brings poverty. Shame is socially attached to certain women but Woman Wisdom is outstanding; she encompasses a variety of moral and material blessings (not gossip, jealousy, envy and selfishness). She works with her hands even in the public square or market with joy (Prov. 31:14-16). Her generosity to the poor and destitute is an act of honour, and not only does she help outsiders, she also does the same at home and her family praises her (Prov. 31:18-22). Verses 24-25 show that she engages herself in ventures like agriculture and business which brings her husband respect/honoured especially among the elders where he is given a prominent seat²⁷. She is not a childbearing machine but a primary contributor to the family life. In vv. 25-27, she herself is clothed in honour and her family is proud of her as one who exercises *sopiyya*, that is, diligence, vigilance and wisdom to make her family happy. In vv. 28-29 her children admire, praise and respect her (Longmann III 2006:538-548). Her beauty is seen in her inward character not only her facial looks or dressing, which is her honour.

²⁷ However, the husband seems to be lazy leaving everything to his wife while he seats chatting and politicking among the elders.

To an extent, she bears positive shame (shyness) in her exercise of contentment (Prov. 3:35; 26:1; Eccl. 1:17; 2:11). Honour becomes shame when it is bestowed on the wicked and fools due to their riches, age or position in the society. The goal of building a positive society ends up in the hands of the corrupt wealthy class and the result is shame and disgrace. They use their money to buy position and honourable titles from their traditional leaders at the expense of the masses, and the masses are deceived to sing praises to them due to their poverty as in (Eccl.10:6-7; 7:1). Job lost his children and wealth which led to shame but patience and positive shame brought back his lost honour again.

2.8 Theological Development of Honour and Shame in the History of Israel

The history of Israel is significant in understanding honour and shame in the ancient Near East²⁸. It was during the priestly era that the emphasis on honour and shame emerged with the idea of being holy and obedient to the Lord, and the need to offer pleasing sacrifices to Yahweh. This was around 2500 BCE in the pre-monarchical period and the United Kingdom era when the people were one and life was organized around their religion, Judaism. Later in the postexilic times, the emphasis changed to worship and cultic practices in the Temple – the Torah, Altar of God, Tabernacle and Sacrifice became significant emblems in worship. From the history of the ancient Near East, the culture emanated before the monarchy, and the emphasis was on keeping the laws of the Torah to please God. The second half of the exile was a time of restoration and seeking honour, and issues of land, Temple, scribal institutions and nationality/independence came to the fore. In what follows, the features of honour and shame in Old Testament theologies will be examined briefly.

²⁸ The context of the history of the ancient Near East is somewhat complicated and it is difficult to point clearly to the time when the culture of honour and shame began, but one thing is true; at different times one can trace the various cultures of the ancient Near East from the Hebrew Bible. It is also clear from the other extreme that Gen. 2:25 is older than that culture, but this does not mean that shame or honour was not observed at that time. The context where it was first observed included Egypt, Mesopotamia, and the North-West Semitic cultures. Mesopotamia spoke Sumerian in the early dynasties, and in Egypt, there was the Old Kingdom and the first intermediate period while the North-West-Semitic languages comprised of the Ugaritic, Punic, Aramaic and later Arabic languages. In the pre-exilic times, the Assyrians and the Middle Kingdom times were characterized by cultures (city state cultures) of the Middle Bronze Age. It is also possible that this was the time of the monarchy when David ruled, and we can see the culture of honour and shame already at work during his time (II Sam. 11:1-5). Kingdoms that rose within that time included the Tanite and Kassite dynasties with Egyptian dominance while the Ugarit was declining during the late Bronze Age. The Persian and Roman Empires followed suit, and the Seleucids and Ptolemaic dominated the Romans before the Hasmonean periods. At that time also, Alexander the great expanded the Roman Empire.

2.8.1 Honour and shame in the cult as Priestly Theology

God is holy and expects all his followers to be holy. He has a place for purity and good relationship. The priestly order of holiness did not entail only the rituals but comprised the clothing, the liturgy and the temple, where honour was observed. The priest could cleanse and declare a person (e.g. lepers in the community) holy or complete a person's healing process to remove the person from a situation of shame. Certain songs of honour regarded the Temple as the place of *kabod* and dwelling of Yahweh; the Ark of covenant where the law/Torah was kept, and the altar of sacrifice. The Torah reading, scribes, synagogue, and the consuming fire on Sinai, etc. were all part of the beauty of honour before God. On the other hand, the lost of the Ark, the captivity, the Temple that was destroyed, the lost monarchy and wandering without a land or country of their own were sings of shame to the people of Israel. Illnesses such as leprosy were tagged as shameful; the victims hung bells on their necks to warn others of their presence, and oftentimes, they were excluded from other people.

2.8.2 Honour and shame in Deuteronomistic Theology

Obedience was a major characteristic of the society during the Deuteronomistic era that determined shame with the people of God. The plague in Egypt, the nakedness of people like Tamar, Jacob and Eli were unwelcome and shameful behaviours in the society. They affected the family institution, the clan and the tribes as well. Anything that affected an individual such as bearing children or sons affected the whole community. Similarly, a curse was considered a shame while a blessing was an honour. Sinai a place where the children received the law signified honour but their wandering in the wilderness without a homeland was a shame. Other inscriptions of honour included proper burial for parents, the virginity of a young girl, the covenant relationship, monotheistic worship and care for widows and orphans. In all of these honour/shame practices, the people trusted God for a nation and a Messiah who would provide for them and unite them as a nation.

2.8.3 Honour and shame in Wisdom Theology

In biblical poetry, various symbols, numbers and imageries were used to depict honour and shame. In the Psalms, the songs/hymns also expressed the *kabod* of Yahweh as a way of declaring his majesty among the nations. As noted above, Wisdom Woman versus the Woman of Folly is one key example of the depiction of honour and shame in the book of Proverbs. Another is the use of vanity to show that materialism only lasts a short time and

human beings need to make wise investments in life. The courage and virtuousness of the woman in Proverbs 31:10-31 show that she is not only a vessel for bearing children but also a contributor to community development who brings honour to her husband and her community. On the other hand, the Woman of Folly destroys her house with her own hands and leads her friends to destruction. She is depicted as a harlot, who is lazy, wicked and causes poverty. Again, the many wives, children, palaces and riches of the king only destroyed his family, and his material acquisitions also led to divisions and quarrels, and that was probably why he later lost the throne and the kingdom in shame.

2.8.4 Honour and shame in the Prophetic Theology

The idea of honour and shame is reflected in the messages of the Old Testament prophets who were also seers who could predict the future. They told the truth as they received it from God and it came to pass. A handful of them were false prophets that compromised their message in shame and also joined the community to mock the true prophets. Their message was characterised by hope and restoration to a Promised Land, and hope for a better future as opposed to their shameful captivity and exile. A future honour, future glory, future victory, a new heaven and a new earth (a New Jerusalem, the city of God) and most importantly, honour and shame are some of the main themes in the vocabulary of the prophets.

2.9 Socio-Religious Perspective of Honour and Shame

Sociological studies have increased the appreciation for shame and honour as two pivotal values in ancient society. Honour as a noun approximates the idea of esteem, respect, high regard, or good reputation and shame as the opposite of honour, approximates humiliation, disgrace or loss of standard. Figuratively, in the euphemistic sense, shame is pictured as nakedness and, similarly, “to honour one’s private parts” means to clothe or cover them properly so as not to face shame and disgrace. Honour and shame have been interpreted as representing a variety of ideas²⁹ in the Mediterranean region since the emergence of social

²⁹ Honour or shame is a social code or code of instruction for human dignity in a community. Its observance in cultures, religions, speeches and relationships is a way of dignifying God and humanity although some people understand it negatively. Again, the idea of honour and shame as a feature of human dignity is traceable in most contexts depending on the degree of its application. It is said that you can only dignify the humanity around you before you are able to dignify God whom you cannot see. It means that the weight and heaviness of respect and honour lie first on humanity and then on God. Shame should not only be interpreted negatively as it could also be positive in the sense of shyness, humility or quietness because the individual desires to gain respect and honour from others. On the contrary, killing another person is another way of looking at shame but it could also be considered an act of honour in certain contexts where people are allowed to revenge in order to recover

anthropology, and that is why it is better understood here semantically. Ijatuyi-Morphe notes that the power of honour and shame as a core value in African religious and social life rests primarily on kinship network, family, clan and the community. It serves as a regulatory power for right and wrong (Ijatuyi-Morphe 2011:164). It plays a key role in the religious life of society, and to some extent, it dictates how the members of that society should act, which is why the crisis of religious difference between the Hausa Muslims and other Christian groups in northern Nigeria has been sustained.

Honour killing³⁰ is regarded as pride, tribute, credit, reputation or award attributed to anyone who attempts to redeem his people's glory. It is welcomed and considered honourable in some places because it is used to recover lost glory or to deal with the shame incurred from the action of others, in which case, the person carrying out the revenge is seen as a hero. In some other places, honour killing is considered a shameful and disgraceful act because it is inhuman to kill (murder) another human being. It means that while some people are crowning a murderer for recovering their honour, some other people consider such killings a taboo because the nature of God in humanity is violated. Honour killing sometimes involves killing a female member of one's family who tries to bring the family name under disrepute. This practice is experienced in many parts of northern Nigeria.

Honour killing can be illustrated with the act of Moses in Exodus 2:11-25 where he killed an Egyptian to protect his kinsman (a Jew). Similarly, it is reported according to Reza in a CNN report in 2011, about 943 women were killed in the name of honour killing in Pakistan. On 6th of June 2012, four women were killed for dancing at a wedding celebration, according to BBCAsia.com. In another report by BBC U.S. and Canada dated 29th June 2012, three members of an Afghan immigrant family in Canada were convicted of murdering four female relatives in a so-called honour killing. The issue here is no matter the honour done to the family, why is it that only female relative die in honour killing? Does it mean that only females commit shameful acts?'

honour. Respect is also given to people of particular disciplines or identities such as the priests in the Church, managers in the office, policemen in uniform or judges on the bench, a king in his palace and other public officials and service providers (Appiah 2010:191).

³⁰ See Reza Saya 2012. "Honour murderer boasts of triple killing." www.cnn.com/August22nd .

Although the two terminologies (honour and shame) appear as contrasts, at some points, they also tend to express similar ideas, depending on the context of usage. Honour may be positive or negative depending on the context and socio-religious conception/interpretation. In this research, the semantic study of the key words (the lexical set of semantically related terms) is an important methodology for analysing the idea of honour *kabod* and shame *bosh* in the stories of the beginning in Genesis. It is assumed that the analysis will also help to relate the terms to human dignity. The semantic fields of the terms offer a better and broader understanding of the cultural context from which this law code emanated and of their relevance today.

2.10 Preliminary Conclusion

Much pressure is often exerted on people to control their behaviour. Thus, for the purpose of this thesis, honour is seen as value, respect and a good name or anything which adds value to humankind, while shame is anything that devalues, leads to a bad name and destroys one's integrity in society or in the eyes of others. To honour a person is to recognize their value and act accordingly or to reward the person with respect, while to shame a person is to contest the person's reputation in the society or to degrade a person's worth. Honour is also an important moral factor to the public and in social lives of the people who practice it. Honour is defined as the importance or worth of a creature in his/her own eyes and in the eyes of the society where he/she belongs or of observers.

The challenge today in southern Kaduna is how to learn to confer dignity on fellow human beings and build up a culture of morality as a legacy for the next generation. Appiah points out that "to have honour is to be entitled to respect and a society that practices respect and honour is a society that appreciates human rights as the right of humanity. Respect here involves giving the appropriate weight to positive regard in one's relationship with other people". In a world where respect is given to those who deserve it, more people will strive to live well and the culture of honour and shame will be sustained. As such, honour or shame is not a decaying order but a contemporary way of showing public integrity, so also a respected person will desire to maintain integrity and act responsibly (Appiah 2010:175-179). Honour is the ability to make some effort in a society to maintain respect for one-self.

In Africa, the philosophy of honour and shame creates an atmosphere for fellowship and for building the bond of respect in the community in the spirit of “*Ubuntu* or *Zumunci*”. In southern Kaduna, respect is also one word that rightly describes honour. This is observed from how one relates to the people in one’s neighbourhood and community at large. As noted earlier, these practices are adhered to mostly in the rural areas because the people are close to one another and everyone knows everyone else unlike in the urban centres where people live individualistic lives. The interesting thing about the southern Kaduna people is that their similarities outweigh their differences; therefore, the analysis of the semantic fields of the terms is also a helpful way of studying them.

CHAPTER THREE

HONOUR AND SHAME AS HUMAN DIGNITY IN SOUTHERN KADUNA CULTURES

3.1 Introduction

Culture is the root of the social and religious life of a community, and it plays an important role in shaping the relationship between members of the community. Culture functions as an indicator that explains the people's life stories and their meanings. Most stories, like the stories in Genesis, define the identity of the people especially in terms of honour and shame as a moral code of conduct (Van Wolde 1996:5-6). A number of people understand the teaching they receive on their culture and tradition more clearly, if the teaching is illustrated with stories. In most cases, when information is documented in books they hardly read; as such, it remains hidden to them but when put in a story form it becomes meaningful to them. These stories or narratives were usually composed from the daily and social life of the people or from their experiences in the community. Van Dyk (2001:25) notes that:

Creation narratives are traditional literatures (folklore) that help to define the identity of cultural beliefs in places where they occur. When reading a text the interpreters should try to always reconstruct the bigger picture in the original story because the story-teller and the story may contain a larger picture of mythology.

According to Esposito, Fasching and Lewis, the idea of honour and shame is discerned from stories which teach right morals. Most narratives of the beginning are built on different characters such as gods, people and spirit beings. There are stories of origin and of people's future in each category of these holy stories – myths of nature, of harmony, of liberation and of history. In early times, the myths of nature are found in every society, around the forces of nature that governed the skies and human destiny which also portray them as personal in human history, whether gods, spirits and sacred ancestors or mysterious forces (Esposito, Fasching & Lewis 2006:16-18).

The history of origin and migration has remained significant in telling the stories of various peoples and their value on earth. It is also from such stories that Judaism, Christianity and Islam got their creation stories. In them, they found the meaning of life, humanity and the value of relationships. In ancient Near Eastern cultures, these stories were part and parcel of

the religious and social life of the people. On a religious level, it was assumed that the sins of injustice and idolatry caused God to rebuild his relationship with human beings, and since then God has given them some ‘dos and don’ts’ to guide them daily. The instructions later became the foundation of the honour and shame culture, which is also a standard for measuring what God expects of his people. The biblical creation records actually relate to the ancient mythologies of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Babylon as well as to Ugaritic, Canaanite and Akkadian literatures.

In Africa, various legends point to a relationship between humans and the sky God who lived in heaven; and because of his distance to the earth, a smaller god who would intercede for the people was needed for quick consultations. Stories of the beginning or myths³¹ and the rituals in the religious stories are narrated to erase the distance between now and the time of origin. In the beginning of time when the world was freshly created by ancestral spirits and the gods, ‘time’ was always a problem; it was an enemy which brought old age, sickness and death which contrasted with the idea of life from the beginning of creation. The goal in all the stories (myths and rituals) was to meet with God in time and make the journey with God through time (Esposito, Fasching & Lewis, 2006:18-22). People love listening to stories as they are being told and the lessons are exposed for their consumption and application in life; the stories are told for a meaningful life in the society. Oduyoye (1995:21) affirms that:

Myths inform the social activities, shape lives and characters and expresses people’s fears. Creation stories of the beginning are imaginary but they echoes how society functions, they also relates to families, their economy and the communal life. Myths help us at times to see the societies’ effort to think through the paradox of life. An awareness of this function helps liberate us to some degree from the negative effects of myth. Myth then ceases to function as ‘Canon law’ and becomes a source of meaningful life to the community.

Dignity is pictured in the social and religious aspects of these stories/myths. They had meanings and symbolism which were respected and nurtured as significant to the social life of the community:

³¹ In China’s myth of harmony, one’s true self is known only in relation to *Dao* and all creation were made possible through “Yin and Yang”, meaning that it is only when social harmony has been achieved that one can understand the universe (nature). Liberation myths also deal with human experience of unhappiness and the search for human experience from which religious experiences are drawn; and religion is communicated through stories using metaphors, symbols or signs. The most important is the myth of history which points to the origin of humankind (creation) from the stories and examples they understand.

Myth tells us about supernatural beings, gods and ancestors. The greater heroes of those days provided them as models for human behaviour, but they were standards for origin and end of creation. They narrated that the beginning of mankind, the Supreme Being and other spirits here on earth were created. They are not meant to be taken literally because it sometimes appears childish (Parrinder 1967:16).

Actually, myths and stories of the beginning would not make sense in our contemporary world mainly because they are mostly fragmented and reconstructed stories that the young mind finds difficult to connect to the truth about nature, life and science. They are meaningless and senseless to today's generation, and that is why cultures are disappearing and many more languages will soon go into extinction.

3.2 Semantic Fields of Honour and Shame in Southern Kaduna Cultures in Relation to their Stories of the Beginning

Various dictionaries show similarities in their semantic fields of honour and shame. For example, Chambers, Collins, Macquarie, Merriman-Webster's, Oxford and Penguin dictionaries of English language all define honour as value, respect, recognition or dignity given to a fellow human being. On the other hand, they consider shame to be ignominy, dishonour, disgrace or humiliation bestowed as a result of one's inability to meet up to society's standard of behaviour. Shame is a feeling related to failure, laziness or indiscipline in the eyes of other people while honour is the evaluation or measurement of the personality of an individual or a group that elevates them higher. In other words, honour is the act of decorating another person with excellence or with a mark of distinction for an achievement on behalf of the community. One can possess shame as in exercising restraint from bad behaviour or a feeling of respect for another person which comes from humility, mostly towards one's seniors or elders and at times younger ones as well.

The culture of honour and shame is a code of conduct that signifies respect, value, worth and high regard or good reputation placed on human beings by themselves. It can be recognition of a person's reputation in a community. Shame is considered sometimes as the opposite of honour but because honour could be negative as in killing a fellow human being in order to regain pride or lost glory and shame could also be positive as in shyness, humility or restraint from bad behaviour or undesirable characters. These words do not always serve as antonyms of each other. There are various ways of looking at respect or the value and worth that is given to human beings depending on the context and the people's conception of human

dignity. In a society where people are respected based on their input in the community, everyone tends to work hard and this helps to curb laziness. The culture of honour and shame will be made clear in the context of the Atyap people group and their neighbours³² to show the semantic relatedness of the words and their culture or belief system.

In southern Kaduna cultures, one cannot kill another fellow and expect the people to blow trumpets³³ for him/her. It is considered a big offence to kill, and great punishments are laid out for such acts. Although it is a masculine or patriarchal society, it is even unthinkable to fight or be associated with such behaviours in the community. Women and children are seen as second-class people in the society and their dignity is hidden beneath that of their father, husbands or brothers. If one desires that one's family (wife, sisters or children) be respected, one strives to be good and to work hard. In the community, respect goes with a good relationship between the husband, wife and children and the extended family because the conduct of one person could lead to honour or to shame for the other members of the family, clan or tribe.

3.3 Different Structures of Honour and Shame

In order to understand honour and shame, certain perspectives need to be differentiated and explained especially in southern Kaduna cultures. This is another way of showing their similarities and differences and how the community portrays human dignity through various characters. Our holiness before God, like honour and shame, must first be appreciated in our human interrelatedness, and then God's purpose for human beings on earth will be attained.

3.3.1 Sociological perspective

It is said that honour and shame constitute an important social virtue that promotes good behaviour and contributes to strong family ties, hierarchy and a web of relationships (De Silva 2005:432). Pitt-Rivers (1965:21) has also rightly noted that the idea of honour and

³² This research has already identified five ethnic groups (Atyap and four others) as the point of reference for honour and shame culture in southern Kaduna. The inclusion of the neighbours here has to do with the fact that they live together as one big family speaking different languages/dialects in one locality, some of which are mutually intelligible, but their belief systems and certain customs are almost the same. Their similarities are due to their: (a) Origin and migration stories (b) Religion (c) Common ancestors, etc.

³³ Blowing trumpet for someone means rendering praises to him. It is done mostly for kings to assure them of their greatness, strength, achievements, and goodness, and of the glory of their kingdoms. The trumpet is blow while praise singers chant accolades such as, "You are the greatest of all kings. May you live long! The warrior of all kings, your power is more than that of Lions and Elephants put together!" In Hausa, this is known as *Kirari*, and in Tyap, *Adyeeb* meaning "praise or songs".

shame is a reciprocal moral value of integration in a community. This is true because respect or honour is like milk poured on the ground which is difficult to retrieve. Appiah (2010:181) sees honour as respect given to someone or recognition of one's achievement by others in a community which depends on how it is conferred. Some early African scholars have observed the relationship to others in that the dictum, "we are therefore I am" which means that humankind is valued, more respected or given honour depending on his/her relationship with other people. It is natural everywhere that people respect or honour an individual based on the conduct of that person because honour and shame have to do with the relationship with one another.

The practice of honour and shame also involves internal conduct which is portrayed in action as behaviour or character. In honour and shame cultures, one is forced to modify his/her character to suit the standard of the society. Everyone strives to see that the rules of the community are not violated or broken, whether written or orally given. The reason is that honour is bestowed on individuals who strive to live up to society's expectation. Among the southern Kaduna people, for instance, titles such as "the protector of the people" (a role only God is supposed to play in the lives of his creatures) are bestowed on people. Those that have gone extra miles to help others in the community or achieved great things outside their community could be given titles such as "hero of the people" or "warrior of the land". Sometimes, a person's wise counsel to the community leadership also attracts honour.

In my judgment, such titles should be earned but at times, the rich class tries to buy titles of honour by making huge financial contributions to community projects. Honour is now the total input or effort of an individual to the growth and development of the customs and practices of his/her people. Bestowing honour is a way of seeing to the progress and safety of the community. It is true that dignity begins with the acknowledgement of the true humanity of one's close relations or associates and then with the ability to honour the creator whom one cannot see. Since God made human beings in his own image, giving honour or respect to fellow humans regardless of racial background, tribal identity or religious affiliation demonstrates respect, dignity and honour to God.

3.3.2 Religious perspective

It appears that human beings often find it difficult to respect and honour one another especially those from a different race, class or religion. This could be due to differences in worldview, certain selfish desires, or the lack of the fear for God and the shallowness of our religious claims. The Jewish religion that gave birth to Christianity and later Islam emphasized honour to God and then to humankind. It was because of the fear of the terrifying presence of Yahweh that his people gave honour and glory to him during the exodus. The superficial, fanatical and so-called radical religious practices that do not open our eyes to the needs of our fellow humans but cause disaffection in the church and our communities must give way to what will help build humanity in us. If our honourable service is to God, then it should start with humankind which is the image of God and the king of the physical world.

In ancient Israel, the hierarchy of honour was first to the kings, priests, Levites and then scribes who assisted in the Temple duties and court affairs. Everyone respected these levels as channels of giving respect to God and a way of dignifying humanity in the Jewish society. In African traditional religion, showing respect was also a strong practice. In southern Kaduna for example, respect was reserved first for leaders such as the king or chiefs, then, for the clergy and the cultic priests, the Dodo (masquerades), the Abwai (also Abvoi, Obwoi or Ku) cult which was a rather scary but honourable cult, and the elders. At home, women and children were treated with respect depending on how their father was regarded. The Abwai cult was well respected as a masculine cult and everyone did their best to please the leaders and obey the laws of the land. The hierarchy of power was not to be broken and anyone who violated the community's rules was taken to the Abwai cult for discipline.

3.4 Honour and Shame in the Cultures of the Atyap and their Neighbours and in Genesis 6:1-4

A society without laws is an ungovernable society that would be characterized by confusion and immoral conducts. The honour and shame code is a code of conduct that aims at curbing indignity and building respect and honour in society. There is no wrongdoing where there is no law, and in a lawless society everything is right depending on the person involved in the act. Although laws are made for people to bring order to their daily social life and to enable proper governance, it can be changed or amended to suit certain situations that will lead to honour and sanity in the community. Southern Kaduna is a lawful society whose citizens

appear ready for growth and development, and if change must happen, it must move from the individual to the family, clan and to the community at large.

The culture of the southern Kaduna people is rooted in the popular Nok Civilization which has been in existence since around 500 BCE. The Nok Civilization covers a wide range of cultures in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. Gimba explains that the ethnic groups in the area usually have a feeling of being related to each other, being separate and yet distinct from each other. Each group is composed of smaller units such as families, clans and villages, and their values distinguish them from one another (Gimba 2011:3). Only five of the ethnic groups in southern Kaduna that constitute part of the Nok Culture or Civilization will be investigated in this study.

James (1997:27-32) notes that:

The Nok culture was that of a very high complex society. *Nok* “to start” in Ham, forms the nexus of “Nok civilization” with a prolific archaeological site in the Nok-Chori hills and valley, a place for sedimentary agricultural activities and vegetation for animal husbandry in southern Kaduna. The use of iron (iron smelting) dates approximately back to 400 BC, they also had skills and techniques for the production of knitted mat, hat, basket and Lion skin covering as their clothes. They blew the bamboo flutes ‘*ntere*’ or the horn of animals to make melodious music and dancing traditionally in worship of their ancestors making rituals to glorify God.

The southern Kaduna cultures or clusters related well with one another and some groups regarded themselves as friends even in the neighbouring Plateau state. Diji (2008:7), citing Sylvanus Cookey who discovered that the use of iron in Nok Culture had been carbon dated to 400 BC, affirms that the iron works probably began around 900 BC and that the Bantu people learned their skills from Nok Culture. However, there are claims that other civilizations existed before the Nok. Gimba (2011:4) shows that a legend relates that Thona had three sons who were the patriarchs of the Gwong people who lived long before the rise of the Nok Civilization in 600 BC-2000 AD. The story claims that Gwong gave birth to Kamah who got married and also gave birth to others and their descendants increased.

In the analysis of honour and shame in southern Kaduna cultures here, the semantics is not based on the cluster of the ethnic groups or cultural ideas but on how people in different localities conceive the terms. Salient issues include God, Order, Respect, Taboos, Stories, Festivals, Honour, Shame, King, Virginity, Chastity, Family, Men, Women, Children, Birth, Marriage, Miscarriage and Death, etc. For instance, there are various names for God, and

while some groups have more than one name, others refer to only one supreme God because they do not believe in the idea of in smaller gods. In other places, the name given to God relates to the particular meaning of life among the people. Some of the items above are only symbols of honour and shame (for instance, the birth of a male child and virginity of a girl or even marriage). In matters of marriage, most groups do not have a stipulated amount for bride price³⁴, and at times, different groups charge different tokens for bride price. Any girl who faithfully waited to choose a husband brings honour to her family especially to her mother.

3.4.1 The Atyap code of honour and shame in context

The Atyap family consists of parents, children especially male, the extended family members, and to an extent, one's neighbours. Life is communal not individualistic, and one's concerns are the concerns of all the members of the family, and to an extent, of the neighbours. This communal life is central to the Atyap and their neighbours as well as to the Hausa as they only have the idea of "we" and "us" not "I" or "me." Much shame goes to anyone who cannot live peacefully with his kin especially with the neighbours or other members of the community.

Mbiti notes that, in Africa, only in terms of others does an individual become conscious of life, responsibilities and privileges; and whether he suffers or is happy, he is not alone in it. In terms of marriage, for instance, a woman is married to the whole family not to an individual per se. The same rule applies to her children; when a child goes wrong, any elderly person besides his biological parents could administer discipline to the child. The African concept of family also includes the unborn members. They are a bud of hope and expectation; therefore, parents are anxious to see their grandchildren. The absence of grandchildren shows failure and the diminishing of the family as a whole. Houses are built in round shape adjoining each other in a circle or a semi-circle so that there are many in a compound. At times, the houses

³⁴ The bride-price is not specified but it involves a little amount of money paid to the parents of the bride along with other gifts. It is never considered as a price for selling the girl but rather a token given as sign of agreement between the families of their bride and the groom to maintain their honour. The honour here does not lie in the token but in the fact that the couple love each other, are being celebrated by both families and their friends, and that God would increase their family. People expect children from married couples, and no parent is happy with the barrenness of their children. If the couple agrees to stay without children, it is considered an abomination or a curse. If the woman was barren, a man could seek a second wife because the people hated divorce; it was a sign of weakness or inability to cater for the woman, which was a shame for the whole family and not just the individuals involved. In the olden days, some families allowed a woman to go into another marriage just in search of children especially of male children. It is also interesting that male children were regarded as more important than their mothers who gave birth to them. Some men paid more money to their in-laws after the woman delivered children especially males. It was not always in cash; it could be material gifts to the parents.

face the centre of the town or the entrance to the village. They may also be built close to the farms. Consequently, whatever happens to a person affects the whole group and vice versa. Therefore, community life means, “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am” (Mbiti 1990:105-106). In the next paragraph, certain taboos or regulations that operate among the Atyap and their neighbours will be considered.

3.4.2 Community taboos

Taboos are mostly prohibitions or the dos and don'ts of a society, which are also regarded as part of the rules and regulations necessary for purity and integrity of the society or as pointers of right and wrong. All the members of the society are expected to observe the taboos, which are diverse and often complex. For instance, a pregnant woman is not allowed to go to the river to fetch water at night so that the child in her womb would not be changed to an animal or attacked. It is also believed that when a chicken is slaughtered, only the family head (who is male) or an elderly male could eat the gizzard. This would enable him gain strength and wisdom to protect the family. Furthermore, a woman may destroy the eggs in her womb when she eats too many eggs, and a girl who maintains her virginity will marry a good or a rich man. Women and children who peep when the *Dodo* (Akursak) masquerade is dancing will pay a fine by slaughtering a goat or a chicken or by cooking a bowl of beans for all the men to eat, depending on the clan. Based on personal observation, same sex marriage or relationships are considered alien and come as a rude shock to the southern Kaduna cultures, to be precise there are no vocabularies for such engagements.

3.4.2.1 Taboos concerning men

The *man* is the head of the family (the honour and patriarch of the people); but being family head is not just a name or title, it comes with responsibilities. A man with many children or a large family is respected and regarded as wealthy base on the standard of our cultures. One who rapes his cousin, mother, sister or daughter is a figure of dishonour, and a drunkard is an object of ridicule and shame. It is shameful for a man to be impotent or sterile. An uncircumcised person is considered a low person and an outcast, as circumcision is an initiation rite for inclusion into the adult community. Moreover, a man that does not contribute to community development is excluded and disregarded; no man would be his friend. One who cannot feed his family would not be respected³⁵. In the eyes of the

³⁵ Among the Gure people, if a man wants to borrow or obtain a loan, he does so at night when no one would see him or know his action, and the secret would be between him and the person he borrows from, because it is

community it is believed that only a weak man will not fight in battles and he is disrespected for not being able to cultivate a large farmland, also a man who cannot provide for his children's education is disrespected.

According to the cultures of the Atyap and their neighbours, in a family it is wrong to beat your wife; it is also shame to steal other people's property. Children belong to every father and mother in the family and that explains why the words cousin or nephew are not in the Tyap language, which means that parents (or anyone else in the family) could discipline a child who goes wrong. This also means that no woman is truly barren since she can train other people's children who come to live with her for support. In addition, an elderly man or woman who is not buried in the village is cut off from the family or ancestors and may not be a patriarch or matriarch of the people. Elders usually gather at the entrance of the town/village to monitor the movements and the activities of the people, to make certain decisions and to receive greetings as elders of the community. At times, they visit the market square to monitor or regulate people's behaviour.

3.4.2.2 Taboos concerning women

A *woman* who cannot maintain sexual sanctity is dishonoured, while a gossip, jealous woman or one who tells lies or steals is disregarded. If she's barren, she is shamed. It is a taboo for a woman to peep when the *Abwoi* cult is actively in a meeting. She is not to go to the river at night especially when she is pregnant. A divorced woman or one caught in adultery would live a shameful life, while a lazy woman who obtains loans from everyone or who spends lavishly, is a laughing stock. The one that cannot relate well to her relatives, especially her in-laws is disdained. Any girl that gives birth outside wedlock is seen as a failure to her mother, family and village, while the one who imbibes alcohol or is into drugs does not have respect, is insensible and causes the family shame.

On a positive note, a hardworking woman will cultivate her farm and sell her produce on the market day to make sure there is food for her family. A happy woman is known by the good character of her husband and of her children and by her concern for the welfare of the family and the relations. Virginity plays an important role in the life of a young girl and every man likes to marry a virgin. Young virgins are seen as the hope of the community and pride of

shameful for a man to borrow. Patriarchy occurs in a male-centred or male-dominated culture, which helps to justify the union of tribes and the defence of the nation under one leadership. It was also the basis for inheritance in the ancient Near East (Matthew 2003:293).

their parents. A widow has no protection rather she is inherited like other properties by one of the brothers (or male relatives) of her late husband. If for any reason she refuses to marry the man, it is shameful but she is allowed to suffer alone or remarry especially if she is young. The community only intervenes if the family refuses to inherit her, that is, to say no one in the family agrees to marry her especially the immediate brothers of her late husband.

3.4.2.3 Taboos concerning Youths/Children

No titles are bestowed directly on children. A *child* that does not respect the elders is foolish. A girl that becomes pregnant while in her parents' house or one who commits abortion is a shame and regarded as almost useless. Even the one that does not sleep at home is regarded as a bad child. Young girls must keep their virginity until they marry. If a young girl does not know how to cook, she is a disgrace to the mother. A male child must be able to work hard (e.g. on the farm) to take care of his parents or assist them; if he does not, he is denounced. Young people rejoice when their parents are being honoured especially in large gatherings such as in the market or church, and during festivals or ceremonies. It is also pride/honour for parents to see their children grow up and become responsible, ready to take over from where they stop. Although the Hausa practice (*bara/mola*), that is a custom in which children, the blind, the sick, old people or other disabled people beg for alms without shame, the Atyap consider such a practice as demeaning and shameful. In fact, children who have and cultivate their own farms make their mothers/parents happy and proud.

3.5 Function of Honour and Shame Culture among the Atyap

The culture of honour and shame among the Atyap and their neighbours is significant to upholding human dignity, and helps in inculcating different kinds of teaching into members of the society especially youths.

3.5.1 To teach wisdom

Anyone who is honoured is believed to be a man of wisdom³⁶ and others could go to him or her to learn or acquire wisdom in order to help their family members or wards. Since honour

³⁶ *Metaphors, Signs and Symbols of Honour and Shame* could be used to refer to honour or to shame. There are several metaphors, images, numbers and cultic symbols that were used by the Egyptians, the Mesopotamians, the Canaanites, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians and the Romans, though the Jews abolished the use of images except Yahweh but they also had some symbols and signs for honour and shame. They used such idea in their socio-cultural life and religion to explain various concepts like in Isaiah 24:23 and 33:9, the *sun* is said to be confused and embarrassed which symbolizes the extinction of the *sun light* on the day of the Lord. Figures

is acquired through one's commitment to community service, others are encouraged to seek advice or counsel before embarking on a project from one who has been honoured. Often, such a person is consulted before a new king is appointed or before titles and gifts are bestowed on members of the community. It is considered a shame for elders to behave improperly in the community by indulging in any form of abuse, alcohol addiction, laziness, promiscuity, using unfair means for making gains and taking advantage of weak women.

3.5.2 To teach holiness

Anyone who keeps the laws and regulations of the society is considered upright/holy and clean, and blessed by the ancestors, while those who disobey the laws or customs of the land are a shame to their people. Honour teaches people to strive to be holy and blameless in the community and to dissociate from shame or anything that can lead to ridicule and mockery. It also helps members of the community to live as one. An honourable person moves in the company of elders and titleholders without qualms, no matter his age, while a corrupt person, no matter his/her age, is considered an object of scorn and shame by all and sundry, to the shame of his/her family and clan.

3.5.3 To teach human dignity

On a general note, the distinction between honour and shame helps members of the community to respect one another without gender difference. It shows that all are created in

like 3, 7 and 12 are sometime interpreted to mean *perfection*. Certain imagery was used for honour while others were used for shame. The image of *qalon* is linked to a *prostitute* in her adulterous relationship with other gods and whose *nakedness* metaphorically indicates disgrace and shame (Jer.13:26, Hab.2:16) and as *harlotry* in Ninevah (Nah.3:5). The word *haper* could mean bringing shame or reproach to others (Prov. 19:26, Isah. 54:4, Jer. 15:90, 50:12, Mic. 3:7) and *yabesh* for 8 times in the primary sense means to dry up, wither, as to shame, be ashamed (II Sam. 19:5, Isah. 30:5, Jer. 2:26, 8:9, 6:15, Joel 1:11) or acting shamefully through idolatry (Hos. 2:5) (Renn 2006:888). In relation to the Israelites, putting one's shame could be seen in (Jer. 46: 24, 48:1, 20, 50:2) as a process of the action on the people in their society and before others. De Silva further states that bowing is another sign of respect and honour in their cultures (Gen. 18:1-2,19:1, 23:17, 37:7-8, 41:43), even stretching or prostrating on the ground was a prominent gesture by which one party show honour to another, recognizing and acting out the honour to another (De Silva 2005:432-433). Like the Yoruba's in western Nigeria, they practice honour to elders by prostrating flat on the ground, the Igbo will kneel down and the Hausa from the north you have to bow to show respect, all of these are signs of respect and honour. You do that even in the public to be an example to others, on matter who you are and where you find yourself respect is a watchword. Sometime you are severely disciplined for not showing respect. Somehow, it is like 'tit' for 'tat' you do for your seniors and your juniors also do for you and on it goes as a way of good life for the people. Among the southern Kaduna people you simply bend from your waist as men while women kneel down, it is that of women that is most prominent in the society even today.

the image and likeness of God and that people should strive to live to respect one another as such pleasing the creator. Thus, awards and titles are not bestowed only on men but on both sexes and all categories of people based on the person's observance of the laws and customs of the society. Moreover, because people know that they could be honoured or despised, they often strive to be careful and hardworking to earn the trust of the community. Nonetheless, **there might** not be some people who still misbehave especially when no one is looking.

3.5.4 To encourage the people

Honouring people is one way of encouraging hard work and integrity in the community. Members of the community strive, on a daily basis, to live up to societal expectation knowing that one day they could be honoured and considered wise or shamed and considered foolish if they fail to conform to societal values. Honouring people acts as a catalyst for unity and cooperation in the community as everyone is pushed to play his or her own role in a responsible way. It also encourages people to perform their duties towards God, their fellow humans and the society at large. It is apparent that if there is no idea of shame, people may not be able to keep away from profane pleasure and entertainments that compromise the integrity of the community and undermine the faith of the young people in the society.

3.5.5 To unite the community

The unity of the community depends on how well members are able to keep to the regulations, because just as the laws of the scriptures points people to the fear of God, so do the dos and don'ts of the community bind the people as one. It is good to know that a person is honoured based on involvement in community projects and members' welfare, and that a person is shamed for not associating with his or her people. In the community, all elders are parents to all youths, and all children belong to any parent, male or female. They could discipline, bless or curse the young ones and it would stand as no one could change what the whole community ratifies.

3.5.6 To teach culture

Culture is a traditional way of social interaction and the standard set by a group of people, family, clan or tribe on how to relate respectably to one another. Some of the significant issues in culture include the people's respect for God/gods, their King, honour to one another, avoidance of shame, respect to humanity, order in the community, family organisation and many more issues related to Men, Women and Youth/Children, taboos, stories, festivals,

virginity, chastity, dowry, marriage, birth, miscarriage, and death etc. As such culture is an honourable way of observing honour and shame in the appropriation of human dignity. Therefore, the community uses the daily social life of the people to teach the younger ones dignity through their culture.

3.5.7 To transmit history

The culture of honour and shame is another way of transmitting historical facts from one generation to another, sometimes through stories, customs and the cultural practices. History is an important aspect of the social life of a people and the people's history also gives a true picture of who the people are and their worth. Their heritage and culture are considered significant to the people.

3.6 How Honour and Shame Are Bestowed on People

Different conducts command either honour or shame among the Atyap. When people deserve honour, it sometimes comes in the form of titles. Titles are marks of honour³⁷, excellence and meritorious service which are bestowed on people whether male or female depending on the context, occasion and the event in question. It could be given or bestowed as a rank of honour in the military or police force, and in the community, it could be bestowed through caps of honour (colours) or ties worn across the chest or shoulder while sometimes it is given as trophies or medals of honour. In southern Kaduna cultures and other parts of Nigeria, the titles are categorised for men and women (children are honoured through their parents). Titles differ depending on the person and his/her status in the society. There are titles for high chiefs, the clergy, community leaders and others who perform or act in an outstanding way. There are also, Emirs (*Sarakuna* in Hausa) and Hakimi a district head to some of the other tribes; who are classified either as first, second or third class chiefs. Under these are also some lesser chiefs who rule smaller communities. They are appointed based on the method adopted by the family, clan or tribe who make up the ruling class (a group set aside for

³⁷ Similarly, names are important to humans. Kafang notes that Hebrew names were generally associated with fame (I Chron. 14:17), being renowned (Gen. 6:4; Num. 16:2) and memorials and remembrance. The term (*Shem*) or name means significance, sign or mark of distinction from others. It designates existence (Gen. 2:19), personality (I Sam. 25:25), and reputation which describes one's degree of honour or respect. At times, it conveys religious importance as a treasure of history. Kafang also notes examples of certain Atyap names such as Byenyanyan (i.e. "Who do I have?"/"Am alone?"), Nyevaan ("I am tired"), Kalat ("If you have nothing" - a female name). The male names include Shyenyin ("Having no one"), Nyanayok ("Who will allow this one for me?"), Bobai ("The dead is back or he is born again," i.e. referring to an ancestor or old person who just died) (Kafang 2002:125-126). The culture of attaching importance to names is prevalent in most parts of southern Kaduna and Nigerian at large. Kato (1975:30) explains that, in Ham, the name Nomdut means "God (Nom) has snatched away" in the case of a previous death, because infant mortality was high.

leadership). The local leaders are Dakaci, Mai Ungwa or Gora who oversee segments of the community; they are selected or changed on the recommendation of the kingmakers.

The various titles of honour among the Atyap and their neighbours include the Tafida, Madaki, Makama, Waziri, Dan Iya, and Turaki, most of which are Hausa influence. However, the title of the Atyap traditional ruler is His Highness the Agwatyap which is also the office of the paramount ruler and custodian of the Atyap cultural heritage as well as those of some other ethnic groups under his jurisdiction. The current ruler is addressed as His Highness (Dr) Engineer Yusuf Harrison Bungwon, the Agwatyap. Some important titles under his leadership are the *Agwabini* (chief guardian of the Atyapland or society), *Alyet* Atyap (the shield of the Atyap people), *Achok Akayang* Atyap (the watchman or protector of the people, also the *Sarkin Yaki* chief warrior), and *Shetima* (the big son of the soil). Others are the *Atangwat* Atyap (Star of the land), the *Wakili Atachaat*, *Agwamtsaai* Atyap, etc. which are titles for men, and the *Atyoli* could refer to an “elder/father”, a mature man or a respected elderly male.

The women on the other hand have marks or titles of excellence which could be bestowed on any woman who exhibits outstanding character. The first and the highest title is the *Ayang* Atyap (Mother of Atyap) a title that is reserved for the wife of the Agwatyap (presently, Ayang Ali Salamatu Yusuf Bungwon). *Ayang Ali* is a general title for women referring to the mother of the house or the family but is used respectfully also for distinguished women of honour. Another title is the *Gimbiya* Atyap (the representative or ambassador of Agwatyap’s wife) who is given power to act on behalf of the high chief’s wife in her absence during official functions or meetings. Others are the *Ashebwon* Atyap, *Akat* Atyap, *Chat* Atyap, *Asham* Atyap or the *Jakadiya*, who represents the *Ayang* Atyap in other places, the *Magajiya*, one who is the next heir to the throne, and is mostly a masculine title given to women with outstanding performance, and the *Zabiya* is the song leader of the women (see *Tyap Literacy Calendar of the Year 2012*).

It is difficult to identify any title associated with shame because titles are marks of excellence and honour either for achievements or for good behaviour. There is no need to bestow titles on one who acts shamefully³⁸ or destroys the self-image of his people. Titles are marks of

³⁸ However, there is *Sarkin Wawaye* or *Wawan Sarki*, who is the chief of fools and is selected from among the servants in the palace who entertain the Emir or Hakimi. In Hausa culture, they receive gifts and honour because

recognition for good character and in no way is a person given a title for stealing, rape, fighting, killing, promiscuity or adultery and drunkenness, etc. Positive shame³⁹ may be regarded as honour, but titles are given only for good character and not bad behaviour.

3.6.1 On men

A patriarch is an important figure in the society and whatever affects him affects the rest of the family. He could be made a big chief, an elder or a small chief based on how honourably he lives and preserves the cultural heritage of the land. In days gone by, it was believed that a patriarch could communicate with the dead ancestors if he bestowed blessings on the dead and that the bad patriarchs joined the wicked/evil spirits. A worthy man was respected among the group of elders who took decisions on behalf of the people. It was also believed that such a person could be blessed by the ancestors in terms of wealth or education. His wife and children could also be respected and honoured because of his conduct. Furthermore, the respect he received served as a protection to his family name, which could be passed confidently to the next generation. Men of honour and heroes are conferred with titles such as *Sarkin yaki*, *Atangwat* and *A Chok Akayang* (that is, the watchers of the land, the star that shines among other people, and the leader of the town). On the contrary, a man receives shame from the people due to his bad conduct and lack of contribution to the people's welfare.

3.6.2 On women

A woman is honoured based on the honour and respect accorded her husband, which further affects the children. Although women are not made kings, every king must rule with a good wife (the *Ayang Ali* or queen of the land) who could easily have compassion on the people as a mother. She is chosen as a woman of respect, honour and virtue. The *Jakadia* serves under the king's wife but she is also the leader of the women folk who could also be consulted on women's affairs. Such women are never considered as barren and it is expensive to marry their daughters because it is assumed that they would bring blessings to the family and raise children who are well behaved. Women are also honoured with titles such as *Gimbiya*, *Jakadiya* (representative), and *Sarauniyan* (queen). When one is never honoured, it is an

of their jokes but not among the Atyap and their neighbours. The title is somewhat used to make a mockery of the receiver, that is, his behaviour is of no significance to the dignity of his community but he is mostly recognized as an entertainer during festivals.

³⁹ Positive shame includes humility, gentleness, quietness, etc., and the titles of honour are similar to if not the same as in most southern Kaduna cultures and clusters.

indication of bad conduct or lack of positive contribution to the people's welfare in the community.

3.6.3 On youths/children

Young people are honoured when they come from honourable parents. People bless them and relate with them with caution especially when it comes to group discipline. They are more protected and respected than all other children in the community and they in turn respect people in the community in order to maintain their dignity. As they grow, they have more responsibilities as they are regarded as the hope or future of the people. At times, titles are bestowed on them such as *Sarkin noma*, (chief farmer), *Magajin gari* (next on the throne), *Agwam Zam* (in Tyap) or *Shugaban matasa/Sarkin samari* (youth leader). However, a youth could be put to shame if he drops out of school, impregnates a girl outside wedlock, becomes a drunkard, divorces/maltreats his wife or abandons his family. In a society where age or gender is not the determining criterion for honouring people, hard work, due process and sincerity will also be valued. Again, when honour is bestowed on members of a community for faithfulness and hard work, everyone tends to be involved in what concerns the larger group or what would bring development and progress to the society. Evil activities and people are controlled when there is equality, fairness and justice.

3.7 Preliminary Conclusion

It has been shown in this chapter that the culture of honour and shame is the lens through which human dignity is observed or measured in southern Kaduna. Dignity in the form of honour and shame here is significant in establishing social hierarchy, religious obligations and cultural appreciation in a community. It is believed that the dignity of humanity is central to every activity and anything that affects an individual affects the whole community. No one is left to understand the meaning of life or to enjoy the good life alone. The central practice of honour and shame here entails the respect everyone has for the other, the value of life given to the neighbour and the various ways in which these are carried out to maintain law and order. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are over sixty ethnic groups in southern Kaduna which live together and share many things in common. They also have their differences but because religion is a key to life in northern Nigeria, these groups, which are predominantly Christians, share similar beliefs. With the advent of Christianity in the late 1940s, most of the ancient practices associated with African Traditional Religions

disappeared when the people became Christians. Today religion remains significant to the conception of honour and shame or right and wrong in a community like ours.

The southern Kaduna people are also given to hospitality, as demonstrated by the fact that they used to accommodate Hausas who sought to engage in dry season farming on their land. These Hausa farmers were offered lodging and land to farm because the people respect/honour visitors. They also welcomed Hausa Muslims who were visitors from the northern part of the state, which shows that they respect religion as being important to human dignity. The Church also became significant in the maintenance of human dignity, because to every change there is always an agent. If the dignity of human beings is to be instilled, the institution of the Church has a big role to play in this setting. It is said that change is one of the constant factors in life, and Psalm 8 indicates the possibility that a minor could also receive greater honour as a form of change. Similarly, the neglected southern Kaduna cultures can become models of change for the practice of human dignity to other communities. Scholars could consider smaller communities⁴⁰ in Africa as important channels for probing the significance of human worth and value, that is, by using the African understanding of “*Ubuntu* or *Zumunci*” to assess human dignity in Africa at large.

⁴⁰ A community is the authority that defines what is right and wrong, as well as values and beliefs. The incorporation a newly born provides a worldview and religious interpretation of the reality of life (Michael 2011:310). In as much as relationship to other people is important certain things also dictate our relationship.

CHAPTER FOUR

STORIES OF THE BEGINNING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT AND IN SOUTHERN KADUNA CULTURES

4.1 Introduction

In the beginning, a people's story was part of the culture, as it helped to shape their identity and build an orderly society. If there were no stories, perhaps the problem of origin and creation would not have been clearly defined nor understood in most contexts in the world. Stories are narratives. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines narratives as a spoken or written account of connected events which could be part of a literary work (Soanes & Stevenson 2008:951). Westermann (1984:23) notes that in the Old Testament, the creation of the world and of humanity forms independent stories, which are presented in persuasive narrative genres and structure marked by plot, sequence, peak and time. The stories portray the figure of God/gods or spirit as an honourable being that deserves human praise and worship. These also indicate how human existence depends on the deities, while humans occupy the earth and control the activities therein as representatives of the gods.

According to Gunn (1992:1023), all kinds of narratives communicate meaning through imitation of life and help in ordering human speeches and actions. They could be used to indicate honour or shame of a person, family, or group depending on the intension of the narrator. Narratives are also constructed in a verbal world that centres on humanity and their relationship to time using lyrics, poetry, proverbs and legal codes that are communicated by a plot and sequence to varying degrees in a dramatic and coherent sense. Van Wolde (1996:177-178) notes that a story gives structure to time by connecting a series of developments in a coherent manner and tries to understand life by the way it orders time. Stories do not just reflect reality but create certain imaginations which transform an idea or image to lessons. The most recurring genre in the Bible is the narrative, and the biblical story relates to the past yet remains relevant to the present realities of life.

In Hebrew narratives, human beings tell stories to make sense of the world and their experience in the community where they live and to serve as lessons for others to learn. In addition, different groups construct stories that ascribe order and coherence to life in order to

explain that life is meaningful, thereby providing perspective, value, and aspiration to life as well as self-identity to the community where the stories are told (Hawk 2003:539). Narratives are widespread today as a form of discourse that clearly attests to human enablement to tell a story and communicate a universal love for storytelling. In narratives, one can differentiate various speeches by looking at the beginning of the story in relation to the conclusion of the whole context (Delorme 2005:1096).

All narratives are meaningful not only in the context which they are told or in the setting where they developed, but also in whatever context they are interpreted. Although the stories of the southern Kaduna people are few and the settings appear imaginary, they speak sensibility and respect in real life situations of the people. Amit (2005:708) shows that the study of biblical narratives in recent times has produced new understanding of poetic⁴¹ devices in a historical text. The devices transcend a mere story of persuasion and give careful attention to the techniques used by the narrator in an imaginative sense, style and genre. Elements such as plot, sequence and time in a narrative are never independent rather they are built on the characters participating in the story.

There are theories of narration that reduce the biblical narratives to mere history due to the connectedness of the narration and there are also other views that they are mere fictions and myths because they do not obey the law of narration and lack sequence. The characteristics of southern Kaduna stories are similar, as they convey the idea of respect and honour using characters such as gods, spirits, kings/chiefs, humans and animals. In the Old Testament, however the stories begin with God as the leading character who serves as the controller of the universe and orders the sustainability of the relationship between humankind and the gods.

Furthermore, a narrative contains various genres including the saga which is written in prose and stories about patriarchs and matriarchs. The account is constructed about a hero or a family in struggle or one facing the challenges of life (O'Connor 2007:542). In addition to character, plot, narrator, time, place and style of the narrative which reveal the nature of the

⁴¹ Stories take shape as godly, human and animal characters are employed to transmit information that is real and relevant. The use of proverbs, songs and poems as narrative devices in stories helps the narrator to keep the meaning far from the listeners, thereby, giving colour and ingredients to garnish the story.

narrative, songs and proverbs could also serve as elements that make the story interesting. Proverbs for instance captures the reader's attention and hides the meanings in between the text which on the surface may not be understood easily unless interpreted separately.

Narrative theology has been applied to a wider range of various interests especially the significance of stories and myths for social and religious perception. Many have considered narratives and stories to be interchangeable terms when it comes to understanding religion and people's perception of and subjectivity to certain values. Religion is significant in reminding people of the values of stories for human life and meaning (Jones 1993:397). In Harvey's opinion, it is through stories that poetry, prophecies and historical events about God and humans are told from creation. It is also in this relationship between stories and the Bible that the life of the Church is interpreted as being relevant, because it examines the relationship between literary forms and theological reflections. It is a relationship derived from observation in reading, telling and interpreting stories for people to derive their identity and to provide meaning to life. In Christianity, the word of God is the framework that primarily supplies narrative information, that is why "Karl Barth said scriptural revelation regards the Bible as the story of God revealed in Jesus Christ" (Harvey 2008:598-599).

The major strength of this type of theology is the connection it provides between theologies and communities where people live and daily practice their faith in the midst of challenges. In order to proclaim Christianity in such a context, one must retell and re-enact the stories of the faithful disciples of Jesus (Tilley 1988:702-703). Robinson (2003:689) agrees that narratives are stories but they become theological when they are connected to God as a character or implied in the plot of the story as it develops. In this way, theology becomes real, close and life changing to the intended recipients, and serves as a standard for honour and shame in the society. Accordingly, the aim of such a theology is to renew the traditional theological thoughts through integrating the narratives (Mieth 2005:1099). This theology of stories/narratives is an interesting aspect of life in many contexts.

4.2 The Elements in a Narrative

a. The plot – A plot is comprehended in terms of the sequence of action as well as the rise and fall or tempo of the dramatic structure and tension that gives significance from the

exposition, conflict and resolution at the end of the story⁴². The exposition sets up the story atmosphere and initiates the main order of events but usually starts with disorder and unfulfilled desires in the development of the story, and later moves to a conflict. The conflict is usually caused by an internal or external influence which the narrator introduces around the character and moves through levels or phases until it reaches a climax where issues are resolved (Gunn 1992:1024). This is to say that stories take a path and they are narrated in a way that one could find their meanings.

The plot is seen as a central element that primarily attracts the interest of the audience. It makes up the organization that goes round in a conflicting manner and later leads to change. (Amit 2005:710). The plot is also the ordering of events in a story which involves a movement towards a culminating peak known as the climax of the story, where the importance or most lessons are drawn (Bauer 2009:226). Amit offers a detailed description of the plot as follows:

The plot at times is arranged unconsciously by the narrator, and it fluctuates and moves until it gets to the intended goals, but at some points the narrator influences the plot. It is a central and important element in biblical narratives which attracts the interest of the audience and reflects the character of the readers either as honourable or shameful from the various characters in the story. The development of the plot is used to determine the message/meaning that is intended by the narrator. The development of the plot takes some time then sends a message [probably of honour or of shame] to the audience where the story functions in the entire detail of the event (Amit 2009:224-225).

b. Character – A character is mostly cast by the narrator or the reader in an imaginative manner and sometimes is made by the narrator who designs the roles each of the characters. The construction is done by observing, assessing, comparing and contrasting the voice of the narrator, the action of the character and the way they react to the narrator's call or warning (Gunn 1992:1025). From another perspective, Amit (2005:711) explains that biblical characters revolve around one God who introduces human figures and expects them to act

⁴² All forms of stories existed in different places, and various contexts had their understanding of human origin from their story. What is special in the creation stories in the Old Testament and in Genesis are the narrative elements which include *coherence, sequence, plot, climax, the characters* in the drama, and the *space of time* it takes to bring out order and the *beauty of the universe*. The stories were also part of the customs and traditions that shaped the history and identity of the southern Kaduna people. They were not just mere narratives but had meaning and were meant to transmit some significant lessons especially to the younger generation for a better tomorrow. The idea of narrative still does not provide a clear and coherent method or theology of finding meaning except when interpreted.

like him or close to him. They are mostly leaders such as kings, prophets, priests and at times representatives of the people, though some stories show human, animal and divine characters which humankind depends upon. The lessons are about God/gods and the way human beings should respond in an honourable relationship to the creator.

Characters are not only important in a story; the roles they play are a picture of certain behaviours that are observable in honour and shame culture. Olojede (2012:353, 359) rightly explains that a character could be abstract, for example, wisdom and that each character is allowed to depict an action in a dialogue. The same may apply to honour or shame. In a narrative, characterization is the most important aspect that brings out the message of the story. In other words, the story lines of a play are explained by characters. The plot also depends on the characters in the story, as Amit (2009:224) points out. Characters are presented as divine (God/gods or spirits as superhuman independent messengers), humans (e.g. kings, prophets, priests or leading figures in the society) or animals (e.g. domestic or wild animals). This implies that even from animals as characters we can derive lessons of life for humanity either in terms of honour or of shame. God appears as the source of power while humankind is the hero that depends on God as a limited being who cannot know God. How biblical stories depict their characters as either living up to honour or to shameful acts (obedience or sin) is what interests us here.

c. The narrator – A narrator is the one who dictates or controls the direction of the story. The narrator comes from a point of view using characters which the reader compares with his life to make amends. A good reader understands the point of view of the narrator from a comparison and contrast of the various characters in the drama (Gunn 1992:1025). In biblical narratives, stories are often told by means of an omniscient narrator who seems to be closer to the human character and is also able to imagine a little of God's heart based on his good relationship with God. It is not everything he shares with the readers, except areas that seem relevant. The narrator sometimes allows the original voice of the character to be depicted through the various scenes in a dialogue which is believed to be a possible reality. This also serves as the standard for measuring the character and the role he/she is playing. During this process, the time gap is observed from the way the storyteller speaks and the context where he stands (Amit 2009:25).

d. Time and sequence in a story – Biblical stories make up a historical *sequence* which is expressed in a space of time, continuity and repetition. The southern Kaduna stories are constructed with similar genres and functions. Even though the stories may be shorter, they could be helpful in understanding the Bible. Amit (2005:712) claims that biblical narratives are noticeable due to their employment of time. They are mostly not too long, and on the average are about twenty-five verses. The stories make up a historical sequence that covers hundreds or thousands of years. The narrator accomplished this feat by skipping certain aspects of the events and concentrating on the major parts, and then reporting the necessary developments in the course of time while maintaining continuity.

This means stories are presented in the space of time in a continuous manner. Every story is set in a particular time frame from the beginning to the end. For instance, in Genesis 1-2, it took God seven days to finish the task of creation and to rest. Further, in ancient mythologies, the gods at times lived up to a particular period before their younger ones overthrew them to become the leading gods or creator. Amit (2009:225) shows that:

Similarly, the kings of Israel and Judah were succeeded by others after a certain period of time on the throne and in our contemporary leadership, times are set for leaders to hand over to others so that there will be continuity and peace to a relative level. In the use of time and sequence, the reader is expected to know that God is the director of history and the people must expect him to act in due time either in their favour or not. The narrator in biblical narratives employs lots of anticipating of the future of mankind and God's action towards humanity.

Thus, time is used as a measure to evaluate what happened over the years and how to take stock of all the events, which later become the history or story of a people or place.

e. Function of a story – The elements described above are visible in every story no matter their origin but the function of a story has to do with the context. A rape or murder case in Middle East Asia (e.g. Pakistan) could be done to regain the honour of a loved one who had been raped or murdered by an enemy (negative honour) but in Africa and some other places, the act could be regarded as shameful and offensive. Gunn (1992:1025-1026) adds that all functions are connected through the medium of language which may carry several meanings unless it is explained. In a story, there could be a similar expression, that is, unless interpreted it could imply a different meaning.

Again, the function of a narrative is what makes it relevant to the people to which it is told:

There is a marked function of a story among the details that are narrated. The functional quality helps in keeping the story line shorter. The descriptions are detailed about a character or place and the purpose contributes to the theology of the story. Esau in Genesis 25:25 was described as red and hairy which points to him as a 'man of the field' the connection to the Edom/Seir portrays him among evil people and himself being evil like the man of Gibeah in Benjamin Judges 19:22. They are people who rejected the code of hospitality, a kind of shameful act in the eyes of God (Amit 2005:713).

The function explains the purpose of the story. In Genesis 6:1-4, the function of the expression בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is to show that the characters are supposed to be men of honour (sons of the gods) but they acted shamefully by raping the daughters of men. Their giant offspring also signified honour and creatures that possess great respect and integrity. The narrator developed the sequence in a manner that reached a climax when God took his spirit from humankind and reduced human life span on earth. As exiles, therefore, respect for one another is crucial.

4.3 Stories and Cultures of Southern Kaduna

Stories are specifically narrated as real events with fictional truth that are general and metaphorical, though a true fiction agrees with reality (Van Dyk 2001:35). Esposito, Fasching and Lewis (2006:16) explain that stories have been noteworthy from the beginning of historical periods. Stories have been told because human beings are not only storytellers but story dwellers themselves. We are in this world through our stories, and through them, we understand the cosmology. Our understanding of good and evil or of right and wrong is not only shaped by the stories we listen to and we are told on a daily basis but also by the roles or characters which we play in the stories.

In addition, the use of songs, proverbs, folktales and folklore as well as characters in a story help to uncover the practice of honour or shame in the society, clan or family. It also speaks volumes about human values and dignity. It is said by our people that proverbs are rivers through which words or messages travel. Whenever they are used in a narrative, they come with deeper meanings and offer greater insight to the whole story. They are languages or signs of wisdom to anyone who knows how to use them in speech. Proverbs are also regarded as vocabularies or language of the elders whose meanings only the wise understand. Whereas

songs are seen as interest utterances that motivate listening and create variety, proverbs are words of honour and secret tools of great people.

4.3.1 Folklore and folktales

Storytelling, folktales and folklore come under the culture or act of narrating a fictitious event or encounter, which is meaningful to the hearers and is mostly made up or fabricated to pass on certain lessons of honour and shame to the community. Such an activity generally takes place in the evening after dinner, and is led by an older person, usually, a woman. The young ones sit on a mat or on the floor under the moonlight and if the moon is not bright enough, they use a lamp to provide light, as they listen attentively. At times, the little ones fall asleep before the end of the story and the parents carry them to bed. The setting serves as a local traditional school where knowledge is acquired through experiences related in the stories.⁴³

Storytelling is a way of educating a child and a form of cultural preservation. Stories always teach lessons about morality, social virtues, wisdom, history and religious chastity. At times, the storyteller asks the children questions at the end of her narration. A few samples of the stories are recounted here. There is the story of a He-goat who asked some passers-by if they saw women around. They answered positively that they saw only the He-goat's mother and sister who just passed. The He-goat quickly admitted that they were also women and could serve his purpose. (Kunhiyop 2008:11-14). In this story, the lesson is that a person can act like an animal (He-goat) if he lacks self-control in relating to the opposite sex (that is, in terms of sexual pleasure). This is intended to pass a message of honour as well as of shame to the hearers, so that they would learn to be wise in their daily interactions. The honour of a person is embedded in his behaviour and it relates to things that happen in the environment.

The He-goat is only an animal but it could symbolize shame because it is a symbol of immorality, an animal that has a high desire for sex as seen in his response that even his sister

⁴³ An example of a folktale related by Tremain is summarized thus: "All the beasts of the forest assembled because their guinea corn had disappeared on a Friday. They agreed to regroup the following morning to punish the thief. At about 8 o'clock in the morning, they all assembled under a tree except the Hyena who refused to come. They waited until it was late but she did not show up, and they left. On their way, at twilight, they saw her coming up softly and sneakily, and they asked, "Oh Hyena! We waited for you but you did not show up; why are you coming now?" She answered, "Since I did not come, who did you punish?" The others replied, "We did not punish anyone." She then wondered aloud, "So it is true that I am the thief?" From that time onward, the Hyena has always admitted her guilt wherever an act of theft has been committed (Tremain 1913:264-265).

and mother are also women and could serve his purpose. The story implies that he could even rape virgins to satisfy his urge. Rape is an act that is prohibited in most societies while virginity is a symbol of honour to a girl and her mother, family and community; as such, maintaining the dignity of the virgin is doing a world of good to the society.

In another story, “the wise-Cock”, one day, went to condole with mourners at a burial ceremony. On his way, he met a wild-Cat which asked him, “Where are you going?” The wise-Cock answered and said he was going to mourn with his relatives. The wild-Cat said, “Oh, really? Then there will be two burials today and not one!” (That means the wild-Cat would eat the wise-Cock) The wise-Cock retorted, “Oh yes! There may be two or three burials because I live with the Dog!” (Cats are afraid of dogs). The wild-Cat remarked that the wise-Cock was funny and indeed wise, then he quickly excused himself that he needed to go on with his business. They then parted ways and the wise-Cock continued his mission. He was regarded as an honourable wise-Cock. The wise-Cock is a symbol of honour in the play from the way it conducted itself –not troublesome but compassionate and sympathetic to those bereaved of their loved ones. In the behaviour of the wise-Cock, we see respect for people, dignity and community life as practiced by most Africans.

Another tale is about “the man who married a monkey” which is often used to illustrate shame. Once upon a time, a farmer married a female monkey. He wanted the wife to go to the farm with him but she pretended to have toothache. The man sympathetically allowed her to stay back and rest. While he was away, she climbed the barn, brought down some guinea corn, ground it and made food for her-self alone. She sang while she was preparing the food showing that she really did not have toothache but was only pretending. She then ate and hid the rest of the food. When she heard her husband returning, she went back to bed and started to cry and hold her mouth. A neighbour who had earlier heard her, and saw her cook and sing told to the husband what happened. He was angry and decided to divorce her but he lived as a bachelor again (Tremearne 1914:244, 314-315). The lesson in this story is that cheating is wrong and it could lead to shame and divorce is also not a solution to promiscuity and shameful behaviour. Similar there are lessons like these found in the Old Testament.

It is also interesting to note that even in the stories, humans related with animals as well as gods/spirits. The monkey was caring as every good husband in a family was supposed to be.

He provided for his sick wife and made sure she did not feel abandoned, and even while he was on the farm, he continued to think of her wellbeing. He honoured her and made sure her dignity and security were in place. The wife on the other hand depicts shame through her lies and pretence, her wickedness and laziness. It is clear from the story that cheating does not pay but good deeds sown today could cause one to find help in times of need. Shame makes people to hide even when no one is accusing them; their evil hunts them.

Divorce was shame to the husband in the story. Divorce in some cases creates problems instead of solving them. It could indicate the lack of self-control on the part of the person involved and his inability to keep the secret of their partner. It is not allowed in the cultures of southern Kaduna except on the basis of marital unfaithfulness. In fact, the parties involved can only suffer in silence because they desire respect and dignity. The three laws of divorce are: (a) Divorce and stay single, (b) Divorce and re-marry, and (c) No divorce. When you divorce and stay single, you are not respected and are considered an irresponsible person in the community, who is possibly cheating in secret. The second option is also regarded as shameful because one would be adding to the number of divorcees and traumatized people in the community with no one to marry them. It is believed that if everyone acted that way, the society will not be a good place to live. The option of 'No divorce' is the stance expected of everyone who desires honour in the society. Such a person exercises restraint, integrity and maturity. People could come to the person for help because he/she has been able to help him/herself, as the elders say, "If the (*boka*) witchdoctor can make you wealthy, let him start with himself" or "If you promise to make me rich, I should first look at what you are wearing".

It is believed in our culture in southern Kaduna that, in divorce one is exposed to dangers of sexual engagement, HIV infection, the shame of being divorced and indignity before other people, which are an indication of lack of wisdom or self-control. More importantly, God hates divorce and the Bible does not encourage it, it is only an option in the case of promiscuity. To an extent, marriage is "till death do us part". Again, when you make others victims of divorce, one is not showing good example since the church and believers in general are to be Christ-like and show others the way to go when problems arise.

4.3.2 Songs and praises

In the course of narration, the storyteller often adopts strategies that will interest his audience such as employing songs⁴⁴ to keep suspense. Songs could be rendered in the narration to honour or shame a character in the story depending on what prompts the song or its composition. Good and honourable songs are sung to praise those who excel in their duties either in war or at harvest time. Conversely, songs of dishonour are rendered to despise anyone who fails to live up to expectation, e.g. when a man records low yield during the farming season or when a woman is always abused by her husband because of her inability to cook well. Praises are rendered only to those who deserve honour such as kings or locals who excel in what they do and make their people proud. The king is praised usually on a regular basis and the songs address his throne and kingdom to advertise his greatness and majesty. The songs are also used to introduce visitors to the palace or to announce the places the king intends to visit.

Songs are classified into five groups in Hausa culture:⁴⁵

- a. Songs to the butcher, blacksmith, farmer, hunter, and other occupational groups;
- b. Songs in the court of the Emir, high chiefs, district heads, politicians and famous singers;
- c. Songs to the general public (title holders, wealthy merchants, high office holders) sang during dance, boxing, wrestling, and youth play or in hotels and casinos;
- d. Songs to comedians and entertainers at market squares and other large gatherings;
- e. *Bori* music played for one who is spirit possessed as well as during naming, marriage and other ceremonies.

It should be noted that the musical instruments used for the royalties are not the same as those for other people, and for *Bori*, the instruments are different (DjeDje 2008:125). The kinds of music played by the Atyap and her neighbours are similar to those of the Hausa. Songs of praise and honour are rendered during celebrations such as the coronation of chiefs, naming ceremonies, marriage feasts, childbirth, bountiful harvest, etc. On the other hand, songs could

⁴⁴ Songs and proverbs are significant in storytelling because they serve as catalyst through which speeches flow, and sometimes, they help in creating suspense and tension in the narrative especially when an animal is singing songs in the story, human beings are flying in the sky or God visited someone's home.

⁴⁵ This is to give an idea of what is obtainable, but the reference to Hausa songs is due to the influence and similarities in the way the palaces are run and in terms of points A, B and C above.

be rendered to shame an individual or a group when things go awry, for instance, when a person breaks the societal norms by killing someone, stealing people's property, losing her virginity before marriage, or getting pregnant outside wedlock, etc.⁴⁶

4.3.3 Proverbs and riddles

Proverbs and riddles serve as catalysts that speed up the understanding of speech and the hide the meaning of what is said. In some cultures, it is believed that they are spoken only by elders. If a young person desires to use a proverb in the presence of elders, he introduces it by saying, "it is said by elders". Proverbs and riddles are also seen as wise sayings and records of beliefs, values and morals which are employed to make a speech easier or clearer. According to the Atyap people, a proverb is the river or channel of communication. Examples include, "The horn can never be too heavy for the Cow" (which teaches endurance and patience). "Unless the rotten tooth is pulled out, the mouth must chew carefully" (that is, one should mind one's speech and not pollute oneself with bad speech).

The use of proverbs and riddles in speech shows the user as a person of wisdom and a good speaker. Everyone likes to associate with such a person who is also seen as a great and learned person from whom one can learn⁴⁷. Some of the proverbs also point to the culture of honor and shame. A Hausa proverb that relates to honour says, "*Madara in ta zube bata kwasuwa*" (one's integrity and respect could be lost due to bad behaviour but honour comes as a result of one's good character). An adage also says character is like making a mark on a stone, (that is, "*Hali zanen dutse*"), while another says, "Small misfortunes can lead to disastrous results", (that is, "*Da haka muka fara, kuturu ya ga mai kyasfi*"). (Madauci, Isa & Daura 1980:13)⁴⁸.

⁴⁶ An example of a song of honour is *Aswon bi nyinyang agyang zit* (i.e. our community is agreeable). A song of shame is exemplified by *Nyi li bwon ani mason ange sa ja fa basi fwoi radio ban gye anyet bay nshe* (i.e. "Imagine the ignorance of our people! They broke a radio open thinking they could see people inside"). These songs are sometimes sung to refer to individuals, families, clans or villages (Dabo 2009:96-101). A Hausa praise song which has been adopted by the Atyap is *kirari*, which is sung by a *Dogari/sankira* to the Emires/Chiefs and elites, e.g. *Ranka ya dadde sarki, 'may you live long o king', Allah ya ja zamanin ka, rabaren ya gaisha ka, Sarki ya amsa rabaren daga Kakuri Kaduna*. It is sung to introduce visitors to the king or to announce to the people what the king desires or where he would visit.

⁴⁷ Pachocinski (1996) relates some proverbs from the Atyap and their neighbours which include 1. *Ba man kyak za a piyen ka* (the one who cause a problem suffers for it), 2. *Bwak myang kwa ma nyinyang* (A worthless person has become wealthy) 3. *Shye mam yet shye duniyio ba* (There is no guarantee that you will keep on getting [Atyap]). 4. *Don lyici maka byis mig* (A borrower has to pay back at the right time [Ham]). 5. *Bi trowa binna phokipho yimi bin* (Greed only leads you to trouble [Gwong]). 6. *Kazah ka aryang basi kakunak* (God has a destiny for us; we only need to play our parts faithfully [Bajju]) See also Dabo (2009:97-99).

⁴⁸ Other examples are "*Ba'a hana ma mabada da rago pata*" (meaning, you have to respect those who favour you) and "*Ba'a boye wa abokin kuka mutuwa*" (meaning you cannot hide secrets from those you trust). An

Examples of Southern Kaduna riddles include:

1. God has saddled him but I shall not mount. What am I? A scorpion.
2. I washed my calabash I went east and west with it but it could not dry up. What am I? A dog's tongue.
3. I have a thousand cows; I tied them together with one rope. What am I? A broom.
4. The great twins turned around but they did not meet. What are we? The ears (Tremearne 1913:58-59)⁴⁹.

4.4 Stories of the Origin of the Universe among the Atyap and their Neighbours

Creation of humankind and the universe according to the people of southern Kaduna has cultural linkages to God. The people believe that God is far from human beings and other creatures due to evil. The story goes that a woman who was pounding yams lifted her pestle too high and it hit God on the chin, so he retreated from humanity. A similar tale says that,

Man's death is due to the action of Chameleon, God sent the Chameleon⁵⁰ with the message of death and the Hare with the message of no death to mankind. The Hare started fast and went ahead but decided to rest and lay to sleep thinking he will rise up later, but the Chameleon arrived before him and delivered the message of death that is why death descended on humankind" (Kato nd⁵¹:17-18).

Oduyoye indicates that myths inform socio-religious activities which also shape human life and attitudes. For example, the Yoruba of western Nigeria believe that Olodumare (the Supreme Deity) sent Obatala with sand to the watery region of the world beneath the sky, along with the Hen and Chameleon to create the dry land. On reaching the waters, Obatala poured the sand which the Hen spread all over the waters, and then, the Chameleon confirmed the firmness of the land for habitation. Later Obatala moulded humans and Olodumare breathe life into them (Oduyoye 1995:22). The Yoruba also narrated stories connected to ancestral beliefs or myths about beginning of the universe.

Atyap proverb also says, "*Asom twei mang atyu ma bah, sei atyu a doot gu ani*" (The Hare is not angry with the one that killed it but with the one that woke it up from sleep). Skeptics would also use proverbs such as "*Asham zwai shyat m-mam bah*" (A good thing does not usually last long); or "*Atyu byia anyet swuo kan shan bah*" (It is easy to swim when someone is holding your head) (Dabo 2009:96-100).

⁴⁹ Other examples of riddles are "I have three legs and each time I start moving I use one. What am I? " ("I am a wheelbarrow"), "When I was young I had two legs but when I became old my legs became three. What am I? " ("I am an old person").

⁵⁰ In an oral interview with Baba Tonak Dabo (in July 2011 at Ungwan Wakili) on the Atyap creation myth, he narrated a creation story that is similar to this and to that which was also told by Prof. Zamani Kafang (an Old Testament Professor at the Kagoro ECWA Theological Seminary in Kaduna State, Nigeria who is well versed in the culture and tradition of the Atyap).

⁵¹ Kato's book *African Christian Revolution and the Christian Faith* is undated but it is believed that it was written before his death in 1975. The reason is that he wrote his *The Theological Pitfalls in Africa* around this time (i.e. in 1975) after the African Cultural Festival, an event he referred to in the first article in the book.

The traditional African concept of the world's reality and destiny is deeply rooted in the spirit world because the activities of spirits govern all areas of the social and spiritual life of people. Africans recognize various kinds of spirits including spirits of the dead elders (ancestors) as well as spirits of non-humans, who are custodians of the gods and are endowed with power for the good of humanity (Turaki 1999:80, 82). These spirits stand in the gap as intercessors, intermediaries or channels of blessings from the Supreme God to the community. God stands above all gods, above all powers and also controls all human activities, but the gods are considered higher than all humanity. Actually, the gods are higher than kings who are higher than the rest of humanity.

In the case of the Atyap, Isichei notes that the *Dodo* (Abwai, Abvoi, Ku or Obwoi)⁵² are part of the original creation. They originated as spirits from among the Aku clan of the Atyap who were the first human settlers in the land. Some oral traditions also relate that the *Abwai* are from Tsoriang among the Bajju people while some others claim that the *Abwai* are from the Irigwe people of Plateau state. The Gwong, the Ham, the Kuramas and their neighbours also have various similar stories about the existence of spirits. The Atyap believe that the *Abwai* ("spirits or *Dodo* in Hausa") live underground and could visit farms and other places through tunnels. These spirits control different aspects of societal life such as worship, farming, hunting, and festivals, etc. Elderly males dominated the cult and initiated a young person (*Magajin Dodo*) into the cult to keep the cultural heritage of the people alive. The leader or priest is known as the *Agwam Abwai*. The people believed that the *Abwai* lived in bushes, in sacred grooves and mountains, and not in houses. In death, a member of the community joins them and the ancestors. The Kamanton (Anghan), a neighbouring group, also believe that the *Nezhen* (spirits) are the owners of the land (Isichei 1988:44-51). This means they are like co-creators with or assistants and intermediaries of God on earth for the work of re-creation and the sustainability of honour in the society.

According to Meek, the *Abwai* (masquerades) are associated with the belief in reincarnation but this belief is unpopular with the southern Kaduna people. Interestingly, it was believed that a widow or widower who died could still meet with the soul of her deceased partner in another place. The *Abwai* was not seen but his disguised human-like voice was heard, which was used sometimes to threaten women and children. He only appeared periodically in a

⁵² The name *Abwai* will be used subsequently to cover the terms for *Dodo* in all the five languages under study.

grass-like costume dancing and roaming the community, and he could strike anyone he came across (it is believed that if he struck a pregnant woman, she could bear a male child). Although not very significant, the institution helped the society to control morality and ensure that the culture of honour and shame was adhered to. The *Abwai* cult disciplined thieves, liars, murderers, those who engaged in incest and adulterers, etc. (Meek 1978:62-63). In Jju (Bajju), the *Abvoi* (masquerades) translated as ancestral spirits, and the men's ancestral cult represented the spirits of the departed ancestors on earth. The cult enforced the wishes of the ancestors (McKinney 1985:74). The *Abwai* cult has almost disappeared today and everyone is doing as he/she pleases. The culture is in shambles as things are now falling apart, and it is unfortunate that the centre of the *Abwai* culture can no longer or really hold.

The practice of marriage was well respected. Meek explains that the Bajju made their women wear certain string necklaces to guarantee that the women will remain in their marriage. This was done to reduce or check the excesses of "sub-marriages" (shameful polyandry). A woman was fined if she divorced and remarried another man during the spring festival. The main festival of the *Abwai* was before the farming season (first rainfall) or at harvest time when the people offered hot beer, goats, chicken, beni-seed and porridge to them in appreciation of their roles in the community. It was believed that they could pronounce blessings on the people; therefore, as they "spoke" from the roof of the house, everyone listened with respect, keenness and readiness to obey. Parents smeared children's head with mahogany oil and they were then initiated while the feast continued throughout the village. The Jju initiated children between the ages of 4 and 8 years while the Ham waited until children were 9-11 years' old before initiating them into the traditional cult of the *Abwai*. This rite was of great significance to the people (Meek 1978:63-65).

Furthermore, the people believed that when a person died, the soul returned into the womb of another woman for it to be born again (reincarnation), and if the person died with the eyes open, he or she would later become a spirit. As such, dead people could rise and leave the grave. The birth of twins was associated with the supernatural power of witches, and people who died from smallpox or other grave diseases were regarded as witches or wizards. Another speculation is that people (mostly women) could transform themselves into birds or animals, and, during inter-tribal wars, they transformed into bees or dangerous animals to

help their people in fighting the war. Such beliefs were to safeguard the behaviour of the people and prevent certain shameful conducts (Diji 2008:33-34).

On myths and legends which are traditional stories of events in the past, often involving gods and heroic figures, it is observed that they explain something in the present (Kunhiyop 2008:11)⁵³. Kato defines myth as a belief system which gives meaning to life in relation to religious life and ancestral heritage, which is difficult to throw away (Kato nd: 17). In a telephone conversation with this researcher,⁵⁴ Kunhiyop confirmed a number of issues and the fact that there are no clear and particular creation myths among the people of southern Kaduna but creation myths are connected to God (Ubangiji). Cooper explains that:

God appears as ‘Allah’ the Hausa name for the creator of all humanity and all nature or “*Ubangiji*” a Hausa word which is also a pre-Islamic terminology used to describe God the creator of the universe. The figure of “*Ubangiji*” circulated in non-Muslim stories about the beginning or origin, which had clearly endured a long admixture with Islamic stories of creation and paradise (Cooper 2010:122-123).

It is believed in southern Kaduna society that God is the foundation and explanation of all creation. Even before the coming of Christianity, the people believed in a creator who made human beings and implanted in them a sense of right and wrong. This God is known by some special names, which denote who he is, such as God in heaven, the maker of everything in heaven and on earth, the sole owner of the sky, the father of all gods, the one who gives good harvest, children, protection and other things (Kunhiyop 2008:16-17). In addition, because of the strong believe in God as the maker of all things, children are warned not to make mockery of the lame, blind, or any other handicapped person because they are also created by God. Among the Jaba (Ham), a neighbouring group of the Atyap, the phrase *sham Nom* (God’s building) shows God as a builder of persons, and if one desires to be a powerful person, he is given the name *gin doh*, meaning “the end of creation” (Kato 1975:29-31).

⁵³ Samuel Waje Kunhiyop is the current General Secretary of ECWA. He was the head of the post-graduate school at South African Theological Seminary and is currently a Professor of Theology and Ethics at ECWA Theological Seminary (JETS), Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

⁵⁴ On 16th February 2011, I conducted a telephone interview with Rev. Prof. Samuel Waje Kunhiyop to enquire about the creation myths of the “Atyap” or any of her neighbours. He could not recall any, but he referred me to B. H. Kato who also could not provide any clear information about creation stories in southern Kaduna. However, he opines that such myths could be connected to the sun or the rain which come down from heaven where God dwells to provide food and supply our daily needs. The sun, moon and stars are also light from God which are put in place for our consumption and use in the environment. To some extent, the people believe that God is symbolized by the “rain” and “sun,” and through them, he created the universe. This is also visible from the names of God such as Agwaza (God of heavens or of rains).

Diji confirms that even before the 1900s when the Christian missionaries appeared, the Ham people believed in a Supreme Deity called Nom (Sun), the controller of the universe, and in the existence of humanity from birth to death. Nom helped them to formulate the laws of the land and their interpretation for proper guidance during wars, marriage and hunting, and in farming or at worship. The sun is a picture of the Supreme Deity just as *Ra* was the sun god) in the ancient Near East. Each lineage of the Ham had its *Kpop Ku* who helped the people to interpret their customs, but there was a senior *Kpop Ku* who was in charge of all decisions and ensured sanity, peace and order in the society (Diji 2008:14-16). Thus, the young people in the society did their best to show respect and to appease the gods through their tradition.

On the belief in a Supreme Deity Cooper explains that:

In the beginning there was one supernatural being called “*Ubangiji*” who is (“God the creator”). The Hausa believe God created *Adamu* who travelled to the cardinal points of the earth in search of a wife. On his fourth return, God struck him with a deep sleep and he drew a woman out of him as *Adama* (not “*Ha’wau*”, the Hausa name for Eve). The cosmos is centred on pairs of beings. Thus, *Adamu* is regarded as a twin with his wife *Adama*, the primal couple then gave birth to seventy pairs of twins and out of shame they hid some on the mountains, trees and rocks. God “*Ubangiji*” was displeased due to the deception; therefore, he said the beautiful hidden once will remain unseen forever, he turned those who were hidden into “*iskoki*” (“spirits and wind”) and demons (Cooper 2010:123-124⁵⁵).

Creation myths are mostly informed by the names of God used by a particular ethnic group. For instance, based on linguistic and cultural features, the Ham are said to share common kinship with the Atyap or the Netzit cluster⁵⁶. These clusters are units that made it easier for the people to relate to one another in the larger association of groups. Inter marriages were allowed based on one’s cluster and such marriages honoured the people and strengthened relationships.

⁵⁵ Barbara Cooper cites Nicolas (1975:111-112).

⁵⁶ Cluster(s) are groups of relations in community/society which ease human dignity and reduce the bigger community to a unit. The Plateau and Bauchi group of languages are part of the Nok Culture or Civilization. Other clusters in the region include the Koro or the Netkun cluster, the Kadara Adara cluster and the Ninzam-Animka cluster. People in these clusters speak languages belonging to the Plateau group of languages. The Atyap-Netzit and the Ham cluster belong to the eastern Plateau language group and they have close linguistic affinity with the Atyap (Tyap/Kataf) cluster made up of the Bajju-Kaje, Aeogrok-Kagoro, Asholio-Marwa, Fantswam-Kafanchan, Ninkyop-Kaninkong, Bakulu-Ikulu, Attakad-Attakar and Anghan-Kamantan people groups (James 1997:26). In addition, the Akurmi-Gure cluster also includes the Binawa, Janji, Kaibi, Kiwafa, Kiwolo, Kono, Pitti, Ragga, Rishuwa, Rumaya, Surubu, and Warsa.

In many ways, the Atyap and their neighbours are much different from the Hausa who are mostly Muslims. The Muslims⁵⁷ argue that human characters should not be attributed to Allah (God the creator) since he neither begot children nor was he begotten. For instance, Muslims consider it offensive blasphemous to refer to Jesus as the “son of God” *dan Allah* because they believe that God could not have a son since everyone knows he does not have a wife. However, the names of God in Hausa are Ubangiji, Allah, Yesu, and Mai ceto. To the Hausa Muslim, the title *dan mutum* (the son of man or son of the father) is used in social relationships among human beings. Therefore, Isah *dan Allah* (Jesus the son of God) is a reduction of the divine to a human father *Uban gida or mai gida*, that is, the father of the household and master of all slaves (Cooper 2010:78-79). Referring to Jesus as the son of God constitutes an offence to them but it is not so with the Atyap and their neighbours. Conversely, the other groups who are Christians are offended when the name of Jesus is blasphemed, but they do not fight on behalf of God to defend his honour.

The Atyap on the other hand share a complex system of customs and traditions with their neighbours. They believe in the Supreme God, Gwatwaza or Gwaza also referred to as Agwaza, by the Asholio, Aeogrok and Fantswam⁵⁸. They equally believed that the Abwai, Abvoi, Obwoi, Ku helped him to make humans understand life in the community. Notably, the name given to God and its meaning indicates an idea behind creation and reveals who the creator of the universe is.

It is conceived that humans are not alone in the universe – there are spirits of gods such as the *Abwai* which assist human beings in their daily interactions. God established creation through the lesser gods and most African myths and legends attribute creation to these gods. Myths and creation stories are replete with the activities of the lesser gods in the establishment of the earth. There are also superior and inferior spiritual beings or powerful and weaker gods whose wickedness and disobedience could destroy the created order (Turaki 1999:116-117). This is an indication of how human sin and wickedness can also cause calamity and the disruption of the earth. Southern Kaduna could be compared to the ancient world because it is

⁵⁷ The fundamental Hausa Muslims could fight if the name of Prophet Mohammed or the Qur’an is disdained.

⁵⁸ The Takad call him Gwaze and the Tuku, Gwazi (meaning, the God of/in heaven) which can also mean (the God of rains or of the clouds), also (the Supreme God in heaven and creator of the universe). God in Jju (Bajju) is Agwaza or Kazah, and in Ham, Chori, Duya, Sanbang and Gwong, he is Nom (the Sun God or the sun as a picture of God), who was responsible for creation even though no one understands whom or where this God is. The Gure also refer to him as Kasiloh (God of the universe), and for the Gbagyi, he is Shoko (the creator).

a society with many stories, customs and traditions – a culture with much diversity, and an entity with many clusters of culture in a single locality.

4.4.1 Customs and traditional practices in Southern Kaduna

The issues raised here are not the only customs or traditional practices in southern Kaduna but are a sample of what is obtainable among the more than sixty groups in the region. Again, the issues below vary from place to place.

I. Stories – Stories are told for different purposes. Usually, they were told in a particular setting by elderly persons who were not paid but derived fulfilment from the task as their contribution to the community. Therefore, such people are strongly remembered as honourable people or heroes in the community, and as people who spent their lives to help others. In the stories, the laws and customs of the land are confirmed and they help to distinguish between what is honourable and what is shameful.

II. Community – The community is defined by the central idea of being one family, united under a single umbrella and guided by certain principles of culture. There are ethical ways of doing things in every community called laws or rules, but in southern Kaduna, an unwritten code of conduct guides the everyday life of the people. It is in community life that one finds happiness, identity and fulfilment of purpose. The community is organized based on a hierarchy of respect that is enforced, and failure to comply with the set rules is what leads to shame but compliance is honoured. The community agrees on the stories, when and where they should be told, who should tell the stories and at what time they should do so. At times, the audience could report to the elders if the storyteller gives false information about the gods but children could also go back home to authenticate the stories from their parents.

III. Family –The family is a small nuclear unit that does not only comprise of the father, mother and children but also of the extended relations. A group of families also constitute a clan which is rooted in the ancestors. From the names of the descendants of the ancestors, the name of each clan can be identified. The clans make up the villages and the entire ethnic groups in southern Kaduna which share similarities in language and customary practice, an indication that their ancestors were probably related. At times, they celebrated certain festivals together to remember their heritage. A young man's wife was referred to as "our wife" by the family and was considered a wife even to his grandfather, and the man had no

right to divorce her. Any issue was handled by the family, mostly older men or women who also served as counsellors.

IV. Marriage – In our cultural standard, the union of two people as husband and wife should be respected by the parties involved, as the woman is married to the family not only to the individual husband. As such, the family could take decisions concerning someone who is erring. Any decision taken in the community or clan or family was respected and followed, and failure to do so brought shame to the person and the family. Marriage was (and is) regarded as a sacred institution that should not be entered into unadvisedly; therefore, it should also not be broken unadvisedly. In the olden days, young men could get married by snatching the young women they liked sometimes at night or based on a plan by their friends, though against the wishes of the women but it was more acceptable to divorce, in fact polygamy is better than divorce. Sometimes, the girl could also elope to the man's house. However, marriages then often lasted longer than contemporary marriages. Couples had marital security from parents and that order was respected. Again, marriage is a family business not an individual affair.

V. Divorce – Divorce was forbidden especially if initiated by the male partner, because the woman is not only married to the husband but to the family. It was believed that divorce exposed one to dangers of extramarital affairs which was a shame. It was better to be in a polygamous relationship than to divorce one's wife. The shame of being divorced could also cause one to be dishonoured by others. Moreover, causing others to be victims of divorce created problems in the society because the one who being divorced was traumatized and afraid of being a symbol of shame and ridicule in the community. Thus, the problems of being a divorcee were sometimes greater than those of a married person. The ability to stay in one's marital home brought honour to the individual as well as to the family, and that testimony encouraged others to choose a spouse from one's family.

VI. Death and ancestors – Belief in death and in ancestors was central to the worldview of the people of southern Kaduna. They also believed that those who lived well became the protector of their family at death and they were remembered by their family, clan and village at large. The spirits of the ancestors returned to the community to live with the people as helpers but some southern Kaduna cultures did not hold this firmly. To some extent, a good

life resulted in a good name which served as point of reference for others in the future. Death was not a permanent separation from one's people but a rotation of life. When an old man died on the day a child was born, the old man was said to have returned to another family in the form of a child. The death of an old person was celebrated because he was expected to join the ancestors but the people mourned when a young person died.

4.4.2 Similarities and dissimilarities in the cultures of Southern Kaduna

Several similarities and fewer differences could be observed in the cultures of southern Kaduna, and it appears that what unites them is greater than what separates them. As stated previously, the people are grouped or classified into clusters based on their similarities some of which are mentioned below:

(a) Firstly, the Hausa names for most of the southern Kaduna peoples begin with the letter “K” which is why they are at times referred to as the “K-tribes.” For instance, Adara is Kadara, Aninkong is Kaninkong, Akurmi is Kurama, Atyap is Kataf, Bajju is Kaje, Aeogrok is Kagoro. Others are Kacecere, Kaibi, Kitimi, Kiwafa, Kiwolo, Kono, Kuturmi, and so forth. Today one does not understand the rationale behind the “K” names but the similarity is clearly striking.

(b) Secondly, the similarity in the spoken language and pronunciations by certain groups in a particular cluster creates room for mutual understanding. Some neighbouring groups and the Atyap understand one another and live as a family, for instance, the Asholio, Atuku, Eogrok, Fantswam, and Takad, but the groups also share certain vocabularies with the Bajju people. The similarities are not limited to words but extend to greetings and daily interactions. In the Atyap cluster, the name for God (Gwaza, Gwaze or Gwazi which means God of heaven/sky God, God of the rains or God as father far above in the heavens) is almost a general name for God in all the ethnic groups in the cluster. The ethnic groups in the Ham cluster also share certain similarities such as Nom, (the name for God which shows God as God with the sun in the sky” or in the heavens living far from human beings and controlling the earth) in Chori, Duya, Gwong Ham and Sambang. The names also point to the myths of the people about God and the creation of humans and the universe. The Akurmi-Gure cluster also share similarities with the Binawa, Janji, Kaibi, Kiwafa, Kiwolo, Kono, Pitti, Ragga, Rishuwa, Rumaya, Surubu, and Warsa.

(c) The third similarity has to do with chieftaincy and titles in the communities. Similarities in most of the traditional and honorary titles in the various communities could be attributed to common borrowing from the Hausa. Similar names are used to address chiefs but some communities do not also use certain Hausa titles, which results in differences. However, the Hausa titles in use have been translated into local dialects and therefore they have taken new shapes and meanings other than the Hausa ideas behind them. For instance, the Atyap do not have the title of *Sarkin yaki* (chief warrior) but the Agwabin (chief of the Atyap-land), or the Achok Akayang Atyap (the guardian or protector of the people, the defender or warrior) either of which is equivalent to *Sarkin yaki*. The Ham on the other hand do have a Chief warrior Chiefs are mostly turbaned with white linen material around the cap and the face with the tail end hanging down the chin but some chiefs wear only long red caps with or without any turban on the cap (depending on the rank of the chief).

(d) The fourth similarity is in the concept of family, clan and community/village life. All the ethnic groups live in smaller communities within close proximity to aid communication and planning of the development of the communities. They all respect and honour hierarchy which helps them to instil discipline, dignity and order. Although it is a patriarchal society where male members are more respected than the female, violence against female members is rare because the family is there to fight or discuss on her behalf, and such discipline is enforced to avoid shame to the family.

Discipline of children is not only left to the parents of a child but administered communally. If a child errs in the absence of the parents, a neighbour could discipline and bring that child to order. When the parents of the child come back, they appreciate the discipline meted out in their absence since they understand that a child does not belong to one person but to the community. In the case where a child acts shamefully, the blame goes to the mother and the immediate family. Similarly, divorce can only be effective when carried out with the consent of other family members and not alone because the wife belongs to the family and not only to the individual husband. Taking decisions alone could bring shame to one's family especially if there is room for reconciliation. Pregnant women are never divorced because it is believed that the unborn child could end up being a chief or governor of the land. Therefore, calls for divorce are resolved only after the woman gives birth to the baby.

(e) Fifthly, in the area of bride price and marriage preparation, most of the southern Kaduna people only pay a token of agreement and not a price to purchase a wife. The substance of the bride price depends on the family and some parent's in-law are considerate and demand only a good relationship and honourable behaviour from the man. The level of education of the bride is not considered as important as her virginity and she is highly regarded if she has not shamed her people by having a child outside wedlock. The people do not believe in premarital sex or pregnancy as a test of the ability to bear children. Co-habitation before marriage is highly disregarded and it can lead to a broken engagement and shame.

(f) Lastly, one important thing that unites the people is religion which plays an important role in the social and political life of the people. Practicing a religion other than Christianity is a shame and a dishonourable act in the community. The traditions of honour and shame are also brought into the ecclesial practices for discipline and respect. The church also observes honour and shame practices in social events such as burial services and coronation of chiefs. An adult who dies in the city and is buried there is cut off from the ancestors. Therefore, the church in the village expects the family to bring the corpse from the city home to the parents for an honourable and befitting burial. A church service is held where everyone who matters come and gives testimony about that fellow, and the death of an elder is a big celebration for the family.

Although the similarities in the cultures are sufficiently clear, certain differences are also observable among the tribes. For instance, linguistic differences are noticeable between one group and another and different groups understand one another only to a certain degree. They also have different histories of origin and migration, even though many of them passed through similar routes to arrive at their present location in southern Kaduna, which is why they have relations in neighbouring Bauchi and Plateau states of Nigeria, who also share certain cultural practices such as greetings.

Furthermore, the chiefs in the region dress somewhat differently from one another and some differences also exist in their masquerade and other annual celebrations. The hierarchy of chiefs and monarchs also differ, as chiefs could be first, second or third class chiefs but they are well respected like the ancient gods. The southern Kaduna people do not believe in multiple gods, even before the coming of the Christian missionaries their deities were not

manifold and all worship was directed towards an unknown God in the heavens or the skies, who controls the rain, the harvest and the people, and was probably represented by the “sun”, “moon” or “stars”. Most of their stories revolved around such figures in order to emphasize the need for respect and honour.

Interestingly, the Jews also had great respect and honour for Yahweh their only jealous God who does not like images. Their God also hated divorce and desired that human beings love one another, pray for their enemies and forgive those who sinned to create order and peace in the community.

4.5 Creation Stories according to the Ancient World

Ancient research⁵⁹ has shown that several religions and belief systems in the ancient world shared similarities with one another especially in the area of mythologies of creation. In Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylon-Assyria, and the Greco-Roman world, the idea of creation was central and several stories from the people’s everyday social life were developed to prove the fact of creation. In these stories, God created and placed everything in its place and is still in the business of maintaining them as a way of re-creating the universe. Although the debate about the origin of the cosmos is on-going, Clifford and Collins are of the opinion that the universe was not influenced by the modern ideas of evolution that claim that things began in a simple state, gradually developed and became more complex, more perfect in respect to new situations. The universe was given by gods to appreciate their importance (Clifford & Collins 1992:2). Human wisdom and godly wisdom can be deduced from the way human beings are now reshaping the environment⁶⁰, but on the other side, there are places where the ecosystem and the general vegetation/revelation are disregarded.

⁵⁹ Prominent in compositions is the fact that most of these stories were invented and repeated or recopied by students of the ancient Near East history.

⁶⁰ Socially, the community was affected by these degrading behaviours, an unlawful act that should not escape punishment, an act that if not for divine intervention could have caused the destruction of human beings from the earth. Religiously, it is an act that affected all their holy institutions as a nation, and painted the place of worship and sacrifice in a dangerous colour. It is a myth of the ancient Near East that is categorized under the Canaanite or the Egyptian system of the creativity the gods. Thus, the culture of honour and shame has developed into a strong sense of virtue which is used to observe the moral behaviour on the one hand and the worthless acts of the society on the other hand. This is an indication that the myth in Genesis 6:1-4 is a separate section and a text that explains the standard of holiness in a community of God’s followers. There is a standard of living that must be maintained by certain groups of people in the society, and failure to do so attracts judgment. Similarly, the giants or angels in the text failed to keep the standard that was set for them which led to greater judgment on the holy land. In another sense, this story is another picture of the need for salvation of human beings due to their depravity. God demands holiness, and sin is shameful to Yahweh. These words are from the Egyptian texts as stated by the author.

Arnold (2009:45-46) notes that creation myths of the ancient Near East reflect two standard genres, theogony (origin of gods) and cosmogony (origin of the universe). Theogony recounts the birth and succession of the gods especially the older deities, and it uses the language of time such as “in the beginning” which points beyond itself to the structure of reality at all times and includes gods and human beings. Theogony also shows how sexual activities among the gods are used as the means of procreation through the pairs of gods. On the other hand, cosmogony recounts conflicts and chaos between the older and younger gods in which the younger gods always emerged as winners of the battle and took over leadership until another period when they would be overthrown. Genesis is more than an account of cosmogony; it is close to theogony, and the phrase, “in the beginning” functions as a prologue to the great history. Thus, creation had to do with time, planning and order of things.

4.5.1 Egyptian Creation Tale(s)

An ancient society like Egypt was in the dark and needed to understand the origin of things in the cosmos and as such, it made these propagations about creation. Pritchard notes several stories about creation only a handful of which will be summarized here. A version of the creation tale of Atum in ancient Egypt in the *Book of the Dead* (1500-1000) sets the deceased Egyptian in juxtaposition with the creator god Atum, as securely renewed creation of life. A part of the tale is related by Pritchard as follows:

The beginning of exaltation and consecration; going up and down in the Necropolis as an effective spirit in the beautiful west; in the entourage of *Osiris* satisfied with food of *Wennofer*. They spew forth day by day assuming, playing at the draught board, sitting in the arbor and coming forth as living soul after the moors. According to Pritchard it is of benefit to him who will do it on earth, when the speech of the Lord of all takes place. I am *Atum* when I was alone in *Num*; I am *Re* in his first appearance, when he began to rule over that which he had made. *Atum* created *Re* who ruled on earth as king, lifted *Shu*, and *Re* named parts of the body, he is the Sun disc that knows today and the future and controls the universe (in Pritchard 1950:3-4).

One does not see much sense in this story except in the terminologies of creation that were used that make it a creation⁶¹ text because there is no coherence in the sequence of the story or in the plot or climax of the narrative. As such, it does not seem to make much sense today.

⁶¹ One could not find the location of this story but it is probably a Hittite origin story of “the Sun God and the Cow”. The cow thrived and the sun God looked down from the sky and his desires leaped forward upon the cow. He became a young man from the sky and began to speak and challenged the cow, “Who do you think you are? You kept grazing on our field since when you were young”. The cow replied and the sun God looked down

Allen also notes that *The Tale of Shu's Birth* (1988a), for instance, describes how the structure of the world-space and its content were derived from the initial creation of the atmosphere. The tale also contains one of the first references to the former negative qualities of the primeval waters. It states:

It is I who am *Shu*, whom *Atum* created on the day he evolved, I was not built in the womb, I was not tied together in egg, and I was not conceived by conception. My father *Atum* sneeze me in a sneeze of his mouth with my sister *Tefnut*, who emerged after me, out of the flood, water, darkness and lostness (in Allen 1997:10).

Again, the tale contains the idea of creation and a picture of the ancient Egyptian system of gods.

During the dedication rituals of a royal pyramid for recalling the first creation (1655-1656), when *Atum* the god of Heliopolis was on a primeval hillock arising out of the waters of chaos and he brought the first gods into being, the god was mandated to bless the rising pyramid of hillock. The text was carved in “the pyramid of *Mer-ne-Re*”, which says:

O *Atum-kheprer*, thou were on high on the hills, thou didst arise as the ben-bird of the ben-stone in the Ben-house in Heliopolis; thou didst spit out what was *Shu*, then what was *Tefnut*. Thou didst put thy arm around them as the arm of *Ka*, for thy *Ka* was in them. Thou put thy arm around king *Nefer-ka-Re*, about his construction work, and about this pyramid, for the *Ka* of king *Nefer-ka-Re* is in it, enduring for the course of eternity. May *Atum* set protection over the royal pyramid of *Nefer-ka-Re* and his construction work? O great *Ennead* which is in Heliopolis, *Atum*, *Shu*, *Tefnut*, *Geb*, *Nut*, *Osiris*, *Isis*, *Seth* and *Nephthys*, whom *Atum* beget spreading wide his heart (in joy). At his begetting (you) and in your ‘name of nine Bows’, may there be a name of any of you who will separate himself from *Atum*, as he protects *Nefer-ka-Re* as his construction work comes to an end in the course of eternity (in Pritchard 1950:3).

Creation went on and in various versions of unconstructed stories, humans, animals, the heavens and the earth was created. The Egyptians also had stories for the origin of everything around them, and to an extent, this idea gave them a wider scope of understanding knowledge from the beginning of primeval times. Their lives revolved around the gods, humans and animals which are reflected even in their stories. This is what makes the cosmogonies of Egypt to be highly polytheistic and powerful, and according to Clifford and Collins (1992:2-3), they had a system of major shrines like Heliopolis, Memphis and Hermopolis, some of which were exalted almost to the level of a state. Their concept of nothingness was

on the cow and later the cow gave birth (in Hoffner Jr. 1997:155). The world came to be from this kind of imaginative stories of the beginning.

personified as Nun who was found in the boundaries of the earth and in the waters underground.

In a text in the *Repulsing of the Dragon and Creation* (1910), which is a book on the creation of *Re*, another version of the Egyptian tale of origin and creation is related as follows:

“The All-Lord said, after he had come into being I am he who came into being after which many being came forth from my mouth, before the earth came into being, before the creeping things had been created in this place”. I put together some of them in *Num* as weary ones, before I could find a place to stand, in my heart I planned with my face and made every form when I was alone, before I spat out *Shu* and *Tefnut* before others came into being to act with me. He planned children from his heart and other beings in multiple forms. I was the one who copulate creation with my fist, I masturbated with my hands and then spewed with my mouth to create other beings (in Pritchard 1950:6).

Creation processes were also narrated in the form of abstract, unconnected and fictitious stories. Of the nine gods of the Heliopolis known as the Ennead (nine), the most important was Amun-Re who masturbated and created⁶² Shu the god of air and Tefenet the goddess of moisture. Shu and Tefenet also gave birth to Nut and Geb who later bore double twins Osiris and Isis with Seth and Nephthys. Nephthys and Seth were enemies because it was predicted that the first set will rule Egypt, and they became jealous (Van Dyk 2001:41-43). The gods were the supposed givers of wisdom to humanity and traditionally it was believed that they were dependable in terms of supplying daily needs, although their names changed in various contexts depending on the narrator of the story.

Higginbotham (2007:218, 220, 223) observes that Egyptian gods and goddesses had distinctive iconographies most of which are a mixture of animals and human body like Horus and Hather. They worshipped various combinations of triads of deities (family group with their gods and goddesses and their children such as Osiris and Isis). The gods included both national and local deities, each of which was associated with certain cultic centres in known cities, and they were worshipped accordingly. They had temples in enclosed houses to protect the divine image. They also attempted to harmonize their religious traditions but the multiple gods and traditions continued to exist and their creation tradition arose out of this context of beliefs in many gods. They had scriptures like stones, metals, wood and their gods were

⁶² At that time, every cultic centre was regarded as the site of creation e.g. Thebes was the place of creation. A song stated that, “Thebes is beyond every city, the waters and land were without form the first times, then sand came delimit the fields and create her ground on the earth came into being from her and from every city with her real name (Egypt). Opposite-her-Lord, appearing and appointed in her place, in her name appointed places and every city to magnify them through Thebes” (in Pritchard 1950:8).

always standing in an upright position as seen in pictures or even contemporary translated materials.

Just as the Egyptians had several gods so did they also believe that the universe was created by the bigger gods, Amun-Re, Atum, Khun and Ptah:

Amun-Re was the fertility god and also the 'supreme god' of Thebes in Upper Egypt (depicted as snake), later seen as 'Sun god' and then creator. *Atum* came from the chaos like a snake and later change to human form; they worshipped him at the Heliopolis. *Khun* was worshipped in the southern part of Elephantine, and appears as a man but having *Ranus* head symbolizing virility and controlling the turbulent Nile. He also fashioned gods, humans and animals from the clay on the potter's wheel and breathe into them. Lastly is the *Ptah* a god worshipped at Memphis as the earth god, he created like *Khun* but from the reverse order through speech (Van Dyk 2001:44-45).

Egypt remained a largely rural and cultured society compared to the Sumerian urban social life. Their children learned from childhood that virtue, hard work and little luck could lead to good life and happiness. Their myths often contradicted one another but that did not bother them. Perhaps they sensed that life was full of mysteries which were bound to conflict at some point. They pictured the creation of humans from the tears of the sun god Re or from the thoughtful words of Ptah or by the skilful hands of Khnum who formed people from clay on a pottery wheel and placed a person in the womb to be born (Carmody 1981:59-61). In addition, the earliest dynasties laid a good ground for the cultures that emerged later and the old, middle and new kingdoms were the sponsors of the change. The gods were personified and amenable through offerings and prayers and they had palaces for housing and priests in their service (Carmody & Carmody 1988:93). The gods needed help on a daily basis but, in turn, they assisted humanity.

4.5.2 Mesopotamia

In ancient Mesopotamia, various myths of origin could be attested but the focus here will be on stories from ancient Sumer and Babylon-Assyrian.

4.5.2.1 Sumerian traditions

Sumerian myths are mostly about the origin of gods and about what they needed to perform their duties especially towards humanity. The genealogy of the gods and the things they needed for civilization can also be used to interpret the origin of certain plants that describe the birth of the gods. Objects like trees, grains, tools and so forth equally belonged to the

realm of creation. In *Cattle and Grain*, it is said that Lahar and Ashnan were created in a private room of the gods so that they might have food to eat and clothes to wear. Creation in myths was not limited to the heaven, earth and humankind but also associated with the gods and their relationship to humankind and the Supreme God in heaven (Westermann 1984:57-58).

In Sumeria, the *Nippur* tradition of creation took place in the cosmic marriage between heaven *An* and earth *Ki*:

An brings *Ki* to flower by raining on her, so as the earth blooms the human race emerged from the soils loosened by the hoe, a marriage that happened at *Dur-an-ki* (a bond of the heaven and earth), a site in the temple of *Nippur*. *Nippur* was the city of *Enhil*, the god of earth who first separated the cosmic pair. The *Nippur* system included a pre-creation phase with an embryonic period of the father and mother gods. In the *Enkidu* system the water god *Enki* creates by bringing up the underground waters via rivers and canal to fertilize the earth, an act imagined by sexual act (Clifford & Collins 1992:3-4).

A display of gods called forth creation in the *Story of Enki and Ninhurgug: A Paradise Myth* (1946: line 65-72):

The main action began when Enki impregnates the goddess, the mother of the land who after nine days of pregnancy gave birth to *Ninmu* the goddess without pains or effort. *Enki* also impregnate his daughter *Ninmu* and she gave birth to *Ninkurra*. In line 89-108, he made *Ninkurra* to beget *Uttu* but it believed that *Uttu's* grand-mother advised her not to cohabit with *Enki* unless he gives her cucumber, apples or grapes. He did, and they cohabited (in Kramer 1950:37).

The general theology of creation was credited to primeval warfare between the cosmic gods. The older gods could not bear the attitudes of the younger ones and they decided to destroy them but Marduk the champion and a brave young god defeated them and became the creator. They believed humans were fashioned primarily to serve the gods, which were the *sun*, *wind*, *waters*, *moon*, *stars*, *rain*, and *peaks*, etc. The gods needed human assistance due to their limited abilities. The epic of the Gilgamesh was not regarded as a religious poem nor was it recited during religious festivals or ceremonies of the New Year, though it was partly divine in the ancient literature (Carmody & Carmody 1988:83-86). In southern Kaduna, these natural lights like the *sun*, *moon*, *stars* etc., are not worshipped but they are symbols of the presence of God (Nom, Mam, Zwat or Nuam) with the people.

Westermann (1984:49-62) cites several Sumerian myths of creation. First is *Emesh and Enten*. In this story, *Enhil* decided to grow trees and grains so he created a state of abundance and prosperity for the people through the fertility gods, *Emesh* and *Enten*. Second is *Cattle and Grain* in which *Lahar* and *Ashnan* were created in the private room of the gods so that the gods might have food to eat and clothes to wear, but the gods could not help themselves; therefore, human beings were created as assistants to the gods. *Lahar* and *Ashnan* brought humans from the heavens to the earth along with gifts of beasts, grains and burden. The third myth is the *Enki and Ninhur* which relates that there was fresh water first in the land of *Dilmun*. During a succession of births, *Uttu* the god of plants was born and as a result of the fertilization by *Enki*, eight kinds of plants sprang up. The fourth is *Enki in Sumer* which is about *Enki* who went to the cities of Sumer *Ur*, *Meluhha* and others where he blessed trees, leaves, cattle, birds, silver and gold, bronze and copper, and humanity. He controlled the plough and yoke, grew seeds, changed the gods with super vision of the canals and the ditches, put *Anshan* in office, then made bricks and build houses. The creation of the gods in the primeval times was not restricted to the heavens, earth and humans but was also an establishment of order in the environment and agricultural activities. Civilization and technology only came later and the honourable picture of creation and God's plans took shape.

The *Enki and Ninmah Myth* (1976:1.159) look archaic and lack coherence but it was relevant to the audience which propagated it:

They praised *Enki* the god of the subterranean fresh waters, of wisdom and of magical powers who planned or directed the creation of mankind and devised ways to help adjust the handicapped in the society. The stories are in two segments, first mankind was created from pieces of clay that were placed in the womb of the mother-goddess where he was formed and born. He was created to relieve the gods from their hard labour. The second segment is a contest between *Ninmah* mother-goddess and *Enki*, in a feast of celebrating human creation. *Ninmah* created many cripple and handicapped people and challenges, and *Enki* wisely 'decreed their fate' by delegating responsibilities to them in the society and they were honoured. *Enki* also created an indescribable human being like an aborted fetus or an old person which *Ninmah* did not like (in Klein 1997:516).

This made *Enki* the greater father of the gods. Again, in Mesopotamia and Canaan, divine-human marriages were celebrated in sacred marriage rites that took place in the temples as honourable events. The rituals were to ensure the fertility of the soil and the marriage. On such occasions, the father was expected to dedicate his single daughters for the service of the

gods in the temple (as an act of honour). The girls served the gods through the priests often by granting them pleasure through sexual intercourse. This was also done to the wealthy members of the congregation (Wenham 1994:65).

Such shameful and immoral behaviours were pleasurable services to the kings and wealthy class. It seems clear also that everywhere were the gods and all was for the gods. The story of creation continued in line 1-11. In those days, the heaven and earth were created, in the years when the fates were decreed, when the Anunna (gods) were born, when the goddesses were taken in marriage and the goddesses were distributed in heaven and were inseminated and made pregnant, and they gave birth. The gods who baked their daily bread set tables and the serious gods did not oversee the work but the minor gods were toiling and digging the canals.

In line 12-23, the story of *The Rebellion of the Gods against Enki* (1976), the creator of the senior gods who went into deep sleep and could not rise up again, until his mother Nanmu the primeval mother and bearer of the senior gods, brought the tears of the gods to her son and woke him. In line 24-37, which is about *Enki's* plan to create man, the story continued. At the words of Nanmu, Enki arose from his bed in Halankug, his room and the place of counsel, the wise and intelligent custodian of heaven and earth, who fashioned every being and created two birth goddesses, stationed and examined them carefully. It was his mother who named them when the clay was mixed on top of Abzu (in Klein 1997:516-517).

Again, we see another fragmented story of origin in which the creation of the Sumerians began with the goddess Nammu who from her sky god brought forth An and the earth god Ki, and from their union, all other great gods were born including Enil who ordered the universe and sustained the vegetation, cattle, agriculture, tools and the art. Human beings were also there to worship them. Moreover, the god Enki who lived in Apsu (fresh waters) as the god of sweet waters, was the god of wisdom, he had *Me* as a code of conduct like the honour and shame in religion and society (Van Dyk 2001:38-39).

Mesopotamia constituted a large context of the ancient Near East culture in biblical usage. Some scholars regard the Hebrew *Aram-naharayin* as a dual term. The Yahwhist identified the ancestral home of Abraham also as the city of Nahor (Haran). It is also the homeland of *Balaam* from the city of Pethor. Mesopotamia in Greek meant “in the midst of the rivers”.

This was probably why many gods were worshipped around the rivers of Tigris and Euphrates (Arnold 2009:54, 57).

4.5.2.2 Babylonian-Assyrian Tradition

The search for order in chaos in the cosmic world was the drama in the ancient Near Eastern traditions. The epic of creation deals with religious literature consisting of seven tablets in Akkadian called *Enuma Elish* (1876) (when on high) which was recited on the fourth day of New Year festival. It is summarized thus:

‘When on high the heaven had not been named, firm grounds below had not been called by name, but the primordial *Apsu* their begetter and *Mummu-Tiamat* who bore them all’, no god had been brought into being, nor called by name. It was then that the gods were formed *Lahmu* and *Lahamu* were brought forth by name, *Anshar* and *Kishar* were later other gods were born like *Anu*, *Nudimmud* and many more.

Speiser notes that the connection between the Akkadian Gilgamesh epic and its various Sumerian analogues has undergone some clarifications in recent years from Kramer’s research. The Assyrian version is even now available in a model edition published by Campbell Thomas as the *Epic of Gilgamesh* (Speiser 1950:60-61). According to Foster, the popular epic of creation preserved a relatively late Babylonian concept of the creation of the physical world. It focuses more on the elevation of Marduk to the top of the Pantheon: The *Exaltation of Marduk* (1989) provides a picture and a parallel of the exaltation of Yahweh as honour. It states that:

When name was not given to heaven or to the earth below, *Apsu* the primeval was their progenitor and matrix - *Tiamat* was she who bore all. They were mingling their waters together, when no god had been brought forth and none was called by name or destinies ordained, then the gods were formed, *Lahmu* and *Lahamu* were brought forth by name, when they had waxed great and grown tall, *Anshar* and *Kishar* were formed even greater. After their lengthy days and years *Anu* their first born was brought forth. *Anu* begot his image *Nadimmud* who dominated all in wisdom, cute in sense and massively strong (in Foster 1997:390-391).

The story continued as *Apsu* consulted *Mummu* and *Tiamat* who could not sleep, they had to destroy the younger gods due to their noise, but *Ea* and *Damkirra* had begotten *Marduk* who stood strong and defeated *Apsu*. The succession of the gods continued in this manner, *Uttu* and *Qingu* grew taller than their parents.

Similarly, in the cosmogonies of Babylon, the gods constantly clashed with each other. The clash was between Tiamat and Marduk (chaos and order), so that creation⁶³ and order became very important in the ancient religion. Van Dyk confirms that in the Akkadian epic, *Enuma Elish* was written in seven tablets and recited on the first day of spring's New Year festival. It was believed that it would guarantee the renewal of creation. Apsu (the sweet water ocean god) born Anu and Ea as great gods, and Marduk was born from their union. There was no peace between them because of the noise of the younger gods which upset Apsu who worked to exterminate the younger gods but Ea killed Apsu first and Tiamat wanted to revenge on behalf of Apsu. They ended up creating eleven monsters with Kingu as their leader, but none could contend with Tiamat except Marduk who killed Kingu and became the Supreme Deity (Van Dyk 2001:39-40).

Another story is *Atra-Hasis* (1949). Speiser explains that in Old Babylonian, *Atramhasis* meant "Exceeding Wise", and the story is associated with an epic of the heroes in Mesopotamia. The fragments of this epic came to us in separate Old Babylonian and Assyrian which was in tune with Gilgamesh. The stories have undergone changes by different interpreters or narrators; as such, various versions of the story exist. In the story, the land became wide and people became numerous in it. The gods below were disturbed by their uproar, and their clamour and uproar prevented Enhil from sleeping. In the morning, he caused a downpour upon the field through the night to destroy humankind which Adad had created in the city (Speiser 1950:104). The story is very similar to the biblical flood, and it was probably re-told by various narrators who made additions or subtractions and changed or mis-spelled names in the course of the narration.

In a more recent research, Foster explains that the primeval history of human origin that occupies the first eleven chapters of Genesis is similar to the Mesopotamian imaginations. In Akkadian, the epic of *Atra-Hasis* (1976) is the most systematic composition. In the epic of

⁶³ The Babylonian cuneiform scripts were composed in the southern part of the region and Akkadian was the dialect spoken side by side with the counterpart Assyrian. The best scripts studied were those found in the court of Hammurabi which had letters, law codes, contract layouts, economics dockets, omens and royal inscriptions, medical, mathematical and grammatical texts, hymns, prayers and mythological works. A text was compared to the Babylonian literary non-spoken dialect (Schmidt 2006:380). The similarities between the ancient stories, their scripts and the Jewish Bible is interesting but opens room for critics to question the authenticity of the Holy Bible especially stories such as this myth and story of the flood which were also found in other literatures of the ancient Near East and narrated in a similar manner.

creation, humankind was created to relieve the gods or lesser deities of their toils, duties and hard labour. The divine destruction of humanity came in the form of a flood similar to the Genesis 6-9 account as a divine response to the noise created by the increasing number of people. The decree of Enhil which appeared in several forms culminated in other flood stories and the survival is referred to as *Atra-Hasis*. The story goes in part thus:

When god did force labour, it was heavy that the seven great *Anunna*-gods were disturbing the *Igigi*-gods (1966) with the force labour; they were digging the water courses to give life to the land. They dug the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers, they heaped up the mountains night and day, they were complaining saying let us face up to our foreman to take up our burden, the counsellor of the gods and the warrior *Enhil* surrounded *Enkur* at night but *Enhil* did not know that *Nusku* opened his gate and took his weapon before the gods knelt and stood up. They were going into war to destroy each other, they later thought and created human beings that bear the yoke of the gods, they were established from the clay. The great *Anunna*-gods administered destinies, *Nintu* mixed the clay while the *Igigi*-gods spat upon the clay, did a lot and created humankind (in Foster 1997:450-452).

4.5.3 North-West Semitic culture

Under the North-West Semitic culture, a brief description of Ugaritic traditions will be presented.

4.5.3.1 Ugaritic tradition

The Ugaritic creation text relates how Baal fought with Yamm and won and was made the supreme ruler over the cosmos (king of the earth or creator). The ordering of the chaos therefore was from both natural forces and the Supreme Deity (Van Dyk 2001:35-37). In the text, the high god (El) is called by the epithet “creator of creatures” (*bny bnwt*) and “father of human beings” (*b dm*) while his wife Ashera was known by the epithet “creator of gods” (*bnyt 'ln*). Baal was subject to El, the creator god (Clifford & Collins 1992:6). Life revolved around the origin stories which were related to the gods and the cosmos, which also define not only the religious but also the social life of the people. Nothing was created without the agreement of the gods. The gods were interested in order on the earth and not chaos. Presumably, there are similarities between these myths and the Canaanite belief system especially in the belief in multiple gods (polytheism).

The concept of *bn il* as related to the respect for *El* the creator, is similar to the manner and customs of many clusters and ethnic groups in southern Kaduna, especially in terms of regarding sons as future warriors, heroes, strength, progress and heirs of the community. The *bene* in Ugaritic is *bn*, Akkadian *binu*, and Aramaic *bar* translated as son(s) in the primitive

periods in these languages. In Egypt, the son was heir of the father and he carried out certain cultic rites on behalf of his dead father. In Sumeria, inheritance was shared equally among sons but the eldest usually received more since he would continue the family's name. In Mesopotamia, a distinction was drawn between sons, daughters and those who were adopted. Akkadian referred to kings as sons of a deity probably begotten by gods. In the Old Testament, a son was begotten by a father and the male children were regarded mostly as a sign of blessings. The idea of בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים in ancient Near East polytheism was widespread but in Israel the expression, בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים was used for "heavenly beings" which Genesis 6:2 and the LXX called divine beings. Ugaritic parallels translate it as "heroes" but it means divine beings (Caragounis 1997:671-676). Even in certain cultures today, sons are signs of progress, wealth, security and power in the family.

In the *Balu Myth* (1933) which is about the origin of the gods, Pardee explains that for reasons not made clear in the text,

Ilu the head of the Ugaritic pantheon at one time favoured *Yammu/Naharu* 'the gods of the bodies of waters' and allowed *Balu* to challenge *Yammu*; *Balu* defeated his rival and ordered the construction of his own royal palace; *Motu* the god of death challenged *Balu* and eventually killed him and after sometimes in the underworld *Balu* retired to life. Another one is the myth of 'Recounting the Birth of the Double Deity' *Sahuru* and *Salimu*, 'Down and Dusk' constitute one of the most important text discovered during the years of excavation. Line 49-54 showed that he bend down, kissed the lips of his wives, they were sweet as pomegranates, when he kissed there was a conception and when he embraced there was a pregnancy. The two women squand and gave birth to *Sahuru* and *Salimu*, when words were brought to Ilu that they women delivered two boys, he prepared a gift for great *Sapsu* and *Immut* (Pardee 1997a:242; 1997b:281-283).

4.6 Creation in the Old Testament

Genesis 1-11 is regarded as a wider context of the creation narratives while chs. 1-3 contains the main creation records and chs. 4-11 are other stories of the beginning and origin as well as genealogies. Brueggemann notes that "God and God's creation are bound together in a distinctive and delicate way", thus showing that everything in creation are bound by the powerful, gracious movement of God towards that creation. The mode was through speech, and the words "create" and "make" as used by the author shows God's ability and might to speak and make things happen. He God's "*speech creation*" was evoked by summoning and bringing forth things from nowhere (Brueggemann 1982:22-24). In the Old Testament, creating, establishing and making are part of the various vocabularies, signs and metaphors of

creation that could also relate to honour and shame in creation depending on the part of the Scriptures.

4.6.1 Creation in the *Torah* (Pentateuch)

From ancient times, explaining the creation stories has proven to be a difficult task. At some points in the history of the ancient Near East, several myths of creation existed but none could state clearly the trend or sequence of the development except the biblical story in Genesis. Genesis 1:1-2:4a is a priestly record which is also the popular text of creation in the Bible. The unit of Genesis 2:4b-3:24 also contain the **Yahwistic narrative** but it has to do with a different order of creation, and it shows how the woman was made out of the man's ribs. The work of creation was complete at that time and God "rested" but the present physical and biological process of procreation are provincial rather than creative (Morris 1975:394).

Crenshaw notes that the Hebrew Bible pictures an ordering of the universe in Exodus 15:16 and Deuteronomy 32-33. Both the physical and social entities constitute a cosmology, a universe sustained by its creator and by human action (Crenshaw 1999:719). In addition, in Genesis 16:2, 29 and 31 God made the womb fertile and directed the development of the foetus in the womb and he is still sustaining life today as in Genesis 2:7, 7:22 (Hiebert 2006:785). Thus, it was a shame for Adam as the first human to fall into sin in the garden at Eden and similarly, the **בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל** are considered as bringing shame to the society when they cohabited with human females.

In Anderson's opinion, despite the various differences in the creation stories especially in Genesis 1 and 2, it is agreed that the task of the creation of the universe points back to God. The creator commanded and it came to be. When God looked at the works he had made and saw his purpose being fulfilled in the way everything functioned, he said it was all good (Gen. 1:31). In this, the immediate decision of the Godhead and the heavenly council to make humans in God's image and likeness was fulfilled. Dignity and value were placed on humanity even in the method of creation as opposed to other creatures that were created through speech (Anderson 1962:727-729). Webster claims that the divine act of originating this world is inseparable from God's continuing providential activities, preserving and governing what he has made (Webster 1993:95).

God's concern after the creation is for the wellbeing of those he will network with. The series of creation in all the "Seven Days" was initiated by God and he placed them in the heavens, on earth and in the sea, doing one thing after the other. The climax was the creation of humans after he had created the light, separated the waters, and made the sea and the creatures in the sky, land, sea, and even underground. Then He made man from the "dust of the earth" and the woman from the man's ribs (as a suitable companion). It was in her that man found fulfilment and courage to lead the rest of the creatures (Gen. 1:26-2:25). In Genesis 6:11 and 9:2, the flood destroyed many creatures on earth but later God caused another order and rearranged the earth and his creatures for a better relationship with himself (Beauchamp 2005:378). The picture⁶⁴ here is one in which God honoured his relationship with human beings whom he made to rule and have dominion over the earth and to return the dignity and honour to God the creator.

The assignment given to human beings to rule and have dominion, till the ground and keep the land is from *avard* "till" which has the basic meaning of "to serve" either as a slave or a master (Lev. 12:6) as Israel was expected to honour and serve the creator in Exodus 4:26 (Hiebert 2006:284). Schifferdecker (2008:65) states that humanity is,

... part of the created order but the animals, trees, mountains and even the celestial bodies are put in place by God for humanity. Other creatures also had their roles to play either for human benefit or for the betterment of the environment. The role is of relationship between God and the rest of the world.

Thus, the sustainability of the earth and the creatures is a sole responsibility of humankind. To this end, honouring the creature or its sustainability should be a focus of the Church too.

Creation stories in the Pentateuch appeared mainly in Genesis 1-11, and as already noted, the story started in Genesis 1-3 where two creation stories were presented as compliments to each other and not as different subjects. The main process is detailed in chs. 1-2, but Genesis 4-11 shows the creation of families and the beginning of their social and religious life as a

⁶⁴ The creation was organized at a time that God set and made all he did. The story of the seven days ended and the narrative about creation as a phase of the history and genealogy of Israel began (Drees 2005:299). This is the progress of the world of the Israelites and of how they spread and developed their social life. The story of creation in Eden that was attributed to Yahweh started with Israel's oldest epic account and their origin. In it, the world that God had made was the world of the Israelite families and the earth was their farmland; nature and the social environment were theirs as well (Hiebert 2006:82). To an extent, we see an agrarian pattern of viewing things in these narratives.

community. The genealogy of the families covers Genesis 4-5 as well as parts of chs. 9:18-10:32, 11:10-32. The story of the flood is from 6:5-9:17 and 11:1-9 tells the story of the Tower of Babel. From these demarcations, it would appear that Genesis 6:1-4 is a unit on its own, a myth with hidden meaning found in the context of creation narratives. In 6:1, creation is depicted in the clause, “when men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them...” and in 6:4, “...when the בְּנֵי-הָאָדָמָה went to the daughters of men and had children by them...” (NIV). Other passages that refer to creation in the Pentateuch include Exodus 15 and Deuteronomy 32.

In Genesis 1-3, it is assumed that two creation stories⁶⁵ are narrated by the author. The first is in 1:1 which deals with the creation of the heavens and the heavenly beings while the second is in 1:2-2:4, which talks about the creation of the earth, humans and matter or the origin of the earth. Although it remains an on-going debate, some scholars agree that God created his works by speech. Westermann claims that creation by speech *ex nihilo* or by verbal pronouncements as in Genesis 1-2 used vocabularies such as make, create, separate, let there be or let the earth bring forth, name, blessed, divide, God put, God separated, and God blessed and other expressions to testify about the beginning. The word make or create was used for everything, and the word separate for various other things. The naming (of animals and some other things) has a sense of defining the context in Sumeria and Babylon; it is used to indicate the finished work of creation (Westermann 1984:86-87). It is interesting that only monotheism is propagated in the creation narrative in Genesis because Yahweh the Jewish God is a jealous God.

Genesis 1:2 only echoes 1:1 by re-introducing the phrase “he created the heaven and the earth”. Majority of modern scholars hold that the opening section of Genesis ends with 2:4a and not 2:3 and as such, 2:4 is the conclusion of a section (Wenham 1987:5). Therefore, creation was a matter of organizing the chaos of the beginning. This is probably not the case

⁶⁵ The traditional interpretation of vv.1-3 is that each successive sentence is based on the *bereshit* which is a stative absolute while another understanding is that the *bereshit* is a stative construct. Verses 1-2 would then be taken as one sentence with the *waw* at the beginning indicating the time and introducing the verb ‘create’, and then it would be “at the beginning of God’s creating or at the beginning when God created the earth... the earth was empty and void”. Westermann says that in v. 2, the parenthesis and the principal sentence occurs only in v. 3 meaning “in the beginning, when God was creating the heaven and the earth, now the earth was without form and void... then God said let there be and there was”. It means that the real act of creation started in v. 2 and that the *tohuwabohu* and darkness was over the primeval deep “and the Spirit of God was moving across (hovering) on the waters...” This shows a balance and continuity of the works of creation (Westermann 1984:78). It is also a transitional sentence that presents the works of Yahweh.

because Yahweh was the agentive cause of events here who was busy making, creating, separating, putting, placing, blessing and naming as shown in Genesis 1-3. In agreement with such theories, one could say that these verses and terminologies complement one another to show the progress and development of creation and they are not a literary contradiction or chaos.

Van Dyk argues that creation did not start with nothing but with chaos and disorder, because the scenario presented in Genesis 1:1-2 was one of utter chaos and desolation in which the waters were ravaged by storms and by wind. The Hebrew word *tehom* which means the “face of the deep” refers to the cosmic primeval waters that covered everything in the universe, and suddenly, God’s Spirit caused order (Van Dyk 2001:78-79). The “order” implies that God brought the light and separated the darkness, and then the waters. While the heavens were shining, he then organized the earth. For Batto, creation theology in Genesis shows much greater continuity with that of the ancient Near East especially Mesopotamia probably because ancient Israel shared a common culture then with her neighbours, which, to some extent, shaped the biblical literature. Human beings only came as servants of the gods because the gods cared for themselves before the creation of humans. In Mesopotamia, Enhil devised substitute labourers as helpers (Batto 1992:16-22). Humankind was now left with the responsibility to care, keep or maintain the rest of the creatures and possibly invent new things since God had deposited his wisdom into human beings at creation.

The book of Genesis has been tagged variously as the book, stories or records of the beginning and creation or of the origin of the universe. The book especially the creation narratives has also undergone several criticism and unconstructive interpretations from science, history, psychology and other religions. In the ancient Near East there were many stories of this kind about creation popularly known as myths of the origin or of the beginning such as the *Enuma Elish*, the *Gilgamesh Epic*, and other creation stories from America, Asia and Africa, most of which did not stand the test of time with historians, science or other belief systems. In Africa for instance, there so many myths from northern, western, central, eastern and southern parts of the continent. Genesis 1-11 is a record of creation which also covers a whole section of stories of the beginning or origin in the Bible.

Human kingship is also patterned after the cosmic struggle that is why humans are believed to be the servants of the gods and human kings on earth. Wenham observes that in the ancient world, stories were often told of sexual relationships between gods and humans, and a set of semi-divine offspring with greater and abnormal strength or powers emerges from such intercourse (Wenham 1994:65). They were referred to as semi-divine gods, heroes, warriors, גִּבּוֹרִים (giants) or greater human creatures depending on the viewer or observer and the name given to the offspring. It is believed that Genesis 6:1-4 is one of such stories.

The myth in Genesis 6:1-4 about the fall of angels, “holy heavenly and spiritual beings”, is really an issue that demands attention. In 6:1-4, the relationship is a picture of the myth that is comparable to the *fall*, but this time, it involves the “angels of God” (spirit beings). This text defines this abominable picture of shame in the context of the patriarchal stories in Genesis, a great abomination and act that should not have been mentioned among God’s people, not even among angels. One can see that God’s creatures had disappointed him greatly by failing to measure up to the standards of holiness and righteousness, especially as it pertained to the set of glorious beings which compromised with worldly pleasures and abused humanity. Similarly, as Adam and Cain sinned, so did the אֱלֹהִים appreciate the daughters of men and shamed everyone in the society, and brought disgrace to humanity. Bosman explains that, “to be human is to be part of the collective identity generated by collective memories about the relationship with God, who is not only the creator but also the sustainer of creation” (2012:5).

4.6.2 Creation in the *Nebiim* (History and Prophets)

In the prophetic books, a number of references to creation are found, but we will consider the major and the minor writings together. In Anderson’s view, the nature gods had mythologies not historical creation narratives; as such, they could not declare the divine purpose “on day to day basis and from days of old” in order to bring it to pass (Isah. 37:26). In this understanding, creation is a timeless event because it belongs to the mythologies that are always repeated and re-enacted. It is in view of this connection between history and creation that Yahweh’s works are regarded as creative acts (Isah. 43:1, 7, 15, 21; 44:2, 21, 24; 45:11). Isaiah appealed to Yahweh’s wisdom and power as creator to demonstrate to the exiles that Israel’s God is above all and is able to redeem his people (Isah. 40:12-31; 45:9-13; 48:12-13). In Jeremiah 10:12-13 and Isaiah 40:25-26, creation testified of God’s wisdom (Anderson 1962:726-728). God created all things, and all things must depend on him for life and fulfilment.

It is also true that creation must depend on God for sustainability. Webster notes that creation is contingent and finite, and stands in a continuous relationship to the creator. Even when humankind was given the responsibility to have dominion over the rest of the creatures, they still depended on God for wisdom. In Deutero-Isaiah's thought, God created the universe for human habitation not for chaos (Isah. 48:18). Other passages like Isaiah 65:17-25 and Jeremiah 5:22 entertain a possible return to the state of chaos (Crenshaw 1999:719-720).

Similarly, Daniel 7:2 shows the vision of the beast in which the winds of heaven are connected to the deity as a disturbance to the pattern of creation through chaos. In Isaiah 66:5, the expression of the temple is identified as God's throne and the earth as his footstool, providing a resting place just as he rested on the seventh day of creation. 16:5). In the vision in Ezekiel 1:22, the prophet saw a platform of mobile chariot-thrones or heavenly bodies, stars engraved on jasper in the heavens where God dwells (Walton 2003:157, 159).

In prophetic literature, creation assumes the same essential and foundational place while the oracles are addressed to community. Anderson argues that Jeremiah was the first prophet to reckon with the doctrine of creation, as he affirmed that Yahweh's sovereign power over history proved him as creator in Jeremiah 27:5 and 32:35-36 (Anderson 1962:726). The prophets believed God controls the universe as well as Israel's future (Jer. 10:16; 32:16-25; Amos 9:5-8). As in most myths of the ancient Near East, Africa and other parts of the world, God made the womb fertile and directed the growth of the foetus (Jer. 1:5) He was also the source of soil fertility and the giver of bountiful harvest (Exod. 23:14-17, 19). He created and sustained human life throughout the generations. Again, a creation that was devastated on almost all cosmic scales are described in Joel 2:30-31; Zephaniah 1:2-3, 14-15, but in Joel 3:18, God transforms it into an unimaginable paradise. God's transformation of nature is more prevalent in Isaiah's prophecies (Isah. 11:1-9; 43:18-21; 66:8, 22) in a picture of restoration (Hiebert 2006:782-785). Although the creation terminologies used in the ancient Near Eastern stories seem to be reflected in the biblical stories, the coherence and the meaning are the reasons the latter stand out.

It should be mentioned here that the conflict of true and false prophesy between Jeremiah and Hananiah is an indication of shame. When a prophet declared what God did not tell him, he

was only uttering what the people wanted to hear. Bartusch (2009:461-463) describes the scene in this story as a challenge between the two prophets who came from similar backgrounds – Jeremiah from the village of Anathoth and Hananiah from Gibeon. In Jeremiah 28, the conflict caused a great confusion for the people especially as the two prophets threw insults at each other. The yoke on Jeremiah and the bars of iron were like symbols of shame, and the contrary messages spoken by Hananiah must have made the people to doubt Jeremiah's office as a prophet. The verbal and physical attacks from Hananiah also questioned the ministry of the prophet(s) especially Hananiah's prophecy of peace.

However, since a prophecy was verified by when/if it came to fulfilment, Jeremiah broke his silence when he openly confronted Hananiah that Yahweh did not send him, the reaction of Hananiah then showed his falsehood. The climax of the drama was reached when Jeremiah confidently declared that Hananiah would die within the year and it came to pass that he died and left a shameful corpse. Honour was also attributed physically in a person's body in various ways, by crowning the head, proper dressing etc.

The people of Israel submitted to Babylon in shame subjecting themselves to another's authority. The narrator relates the peak of this drama at the point when Jeremiah defeated Hananiah and confirmed that he would die at a specific period of time, and it was fulfilled. In the end, honour was returned to Jeremiah and everyone respected him as a true prophet, while public disgrace went to Hananiah whose supporters could no longer hide, as they recognized that truly Yahweh did not send Hananiah. He was a liar and a deceiver of the people. The story was plotted in such a way that its significance was reserved for the end of the story, at the peak where the lessons would be drawn from the characters involved.

In the historical books, the kings of Israel and Judah were categorized into two – those who followed the path of their father David (e.g. Josiah and Hezekiah) depicted an honourable image of the Kings before their people, and those who could not follow this way and derailed from God's way depicted shame to their people and to Yahweh. Kings especially those of the southern kingdom sinned and could not live honourably which led to them taken captive along with the ark of God. The kings also lived in similar successions like the ancient gods where smaller gods succeeded the bigger ones. Kings were succeeded by their sons (or siblings), and some of the kings treated the people badly compared to their fathers (e.g.

Solomon and Rehoboam, who wanted to beat the people with scorpions as opposed to his father who treated them harshly). This trend can be traced throughout the scripture.

4.6.3 Creation in the *Ketubim* (Writings, Wisdom literature and Psalms)

As shown earlier, in wisdom books, creation is depicted with various imageries such as Wisdom Woman or Woman Folly. In Psalms 8, 19, and 104, creation is also attributed to God. Anderson explains that according to Psalm 24:2 and 104:5, the earth itself is founded upon pillars which are sunk into the subterranean waters, in the depths of Sheol, meaning that the habitable world is surrounded by the waters of chaos. Unless held back, the waters could engulf the cosmos (Anderson 1962:726). However, creation brought honour to God that was why he was proud to announce at the end of his task that all was “very good”.

It is not only in the Pentateuch that creation, that is, humankind, is honourable and given the honour to be “god on earth” and rule over other creatures. In the Prophets, the ability to foresee the future and make pronouncements that come to pass is an indication of the presence of the godly wisdom in human beings. The imagery explaining God as creator and the wisdom displayed by humanity also depicts God’s wisdom in how human beings continue with procreation and the ability to invent things here on earth to make life easy for humanity. Collins notes that some of the Psalms used cosmological terms and language (Ps. 74:12-17; 93). Moreover, in certain places, the Psalmist mixes historical discussions with cosmological issues (Ps. 44:2-9; 66:5-9; 74:1-2; 77:16; 78:42-45; 80:9-12). The language of cosmology is incorporated into the style and in it are found laments and hymns. The reason is because ancient cosmology functions as national stories which include the society in the origin of the universe (Collins 1992:60-69). Job is seen accusing God of negligence regarding the universe and he urged God to appear in court to defend his divine conduct. In his opinion, God supervised the birth of the universe and he showed how the turbulent water symbolized chaos as in the ancient myths. Again, Yahweh was the one who secured the earth on its pillars (Crenshaw 1992:71-72).

Creation according to Proverbs 8:22-31 is defined by the relationship between humankind and God through wisdom. Metaphors of “God as Procreator”, “as Creator”, “as Co-creator” and “as Re-creator” were used to show that wisdom was born before the creation of the cosmos. The metaphor of birth underscores wisdom as the daughter of God and wisdom is

personified both as human and divine, being also involved in the creation of the world of human beings. At creation, “she was with God as a darling child’ when the heavens and the earth were carved out of the face of the deep v. 27 and now God inhabits the world in humanity and their activities (Yee 1992:89-94). Human beings are members of the family of God and he expects honour from them. Crenshaw (1999:719) shows that the royal covenant tradition stresses a relationship between the order of the cosmos and the political order in Psalms 74 and 89. In the wisdom tradition, it emphasizes creation as the basis of an order of human identity and acts in accordance for their benefits. Furthermore, in the cosmos everything serves a meaningful purpose as in Proverbs 16:4; Ecclesiastes 3:11 and wisdom functions as an agent of creation with the Godhead in the beginning as in Proverbs 8:25-27; Siracus 24:3, 9; Wisdom 7:24-25. The appreciation of the creatures as being “very good” is again an indication of honour and as the positive value attached to all that God has made.

Creation is not limited to one person as creator; God’s Spirit was also involved in creation (Job 33:4; Psalm 104:30) and creation was the work of the triune God (McKim 2001:304). The wisdom text sees a permanent organization of the created order, a principle that goes beyond Proverbs 3:19, 8:22-31 and Siracus 1:4, 9. In Ecclesiastes, it is inspirational, and in Job, it is faced with the misfortune of a just and upright person who describes creation as surpassing all. The Song of Songs contrasts the meaning of creation with idolatry and illustrates “the end of the wise” with the idea of “renewed” creation. The origin of human body is also a pointer to creation in Psalm 139:13, Proverbs 30:18 and Maccabees 7:22. Again, that which inspires praise is not merely the creation of heaven and earth but the uniting power and compassion in one’s act (Psalm 147. The creator felt loved and fulfilled because of what he had created as an indication of his purpose for human beings in Wisdom 11:23 and Siracus 18:13. The creative act also found consummation in the new creation, as in Psalm 51:12 (Beauchamp 2005:379).

Typically, the Psalmist describes God’s establishment of a larger cosmic order as the context or foundation of God’s establishment of the order of history (Ps. 19, 93) while the praise of God is also expressed by other members of creation in Psalms 96-98, 145, 148 and 150. In Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes, the creation of nature and humanity points to the understanding of God’s acts and the need for human beings to respond with honour, respect

and dignity to the creator, giving value to him (Hiebert 2006:781-782). In addition to wisdom in creation,

The best known feature of creation text in the wisdom literatures is the description with imagery of the wisdom women in Proverbs 8:22-31. In fact there is debate on her role at creation by scholars. The word *shq* in Psalm 104:26 used to describe wisdom of creation is playing a role with the Leviathans and evokes the image of the creator who delights in what he has created Psalm 104:13 (Schifferdecker 2008:64-65).

The joy of the creator over the works of his hands runs through the Bible leading to honour and positive shame that could build up the society. It has been shown that Psalm 8 is clearly related to Genesis 1:26-28 in terms of the importance of human beings on earth and the royal dominion given to them to rule, to subdue and to be accountable for what happens on the earth. Both living and non-living things are subjected to human control. Critically speaking, the *imago Dei* is seen in humans from their inventions, the wisdom they exercise to rule the world and the concern they have for other creatures. One could also argue convincingly that human beings are gods on earth, and they possess some content of the divine in them. The human imagery in Psalm 8 is a reference to the patriarchal influence just as the Atyap tradition is an indirect pointer to the way God regards humans. However, one should not make the mistake of equating God with humans, as no one is worthy of worship except God.

The question “Why is God so mindful of humankind?” in Psalm 8, formed the framework for honour and shame and even when they failed to keep the relationship and sinned, God continued to love humans. The preference God gave humans over other creatures is a pointer to them to honour and keep his commands, and it would attract others to honour and relate with them in return just as the early church practiced. As God relates with humans, so should they also relate with the rest of creation and fulfil God’s plans and purpose for creating the living and non-living things. Honour and the fear of God were in God’s program from the beginning of human existence. Even though some of the creatures are wild, bigger and dangerous, they remain under human leadership and control.

Creation is the crown of God’s work but the various stories have compounded the controversy about creation and up till now, it is debatable to those who have not yet discovered the hidden truth of the origin and existence of nature as part of the dignity of humankind from God. God authored all creation and made the human environment beautiful, expects humans to maintain the natural and the general revelation as a way of relating to him.

In southern Kaduna cultures, the origin of humankind and the multiplication of people on the earth lie in their stories which attributed creation to God. Although the stories of the *Abwai*, *Abvai*, *Obwoi* or *Ku* did not show that they created humankind, they served as channels of understanding human beings as well as relating to the creator and doing his will on earth. Thus, dignity was inferred from their everyday stories, as they had no law books like the Bible or written codes of conduct like constitution that guided the way they related with one another as a community but these oral traditions and cultural stories were the catalyst for understanding the Bible and Old Testament stories especially the Genesis narratives of creation.

4.7 Preliminary Conclusion

Stories have been used in the past as a means of entertainment and leisure but in this study, it is shown that they were also important for distinguishing between right and wrong in terms of honour and shame. The narratives are also functional in a context like southern Kaduna, where they are plotted in a way that the characters involved portray positive or negative behaviours of people in a society and the stories are narrated to challenge people to uphold human dignity. Most lessons are drawn at the climax of the story, the point where the listeners measure themselves either as honourable or shameful based on the stories.

In the ancient Near East, stories or myths were constructed in a fictitious manner but in them people found their identity which developed and surrounded their history. Stories function in southern Kaduna not only as a means of strengthening and developing the culture of honour and shame but also as a way of appreciating human dignity and harmonious relationship in the environment⁶⁶. These stories were also helpful in creating standards for the culture of honour and shame in the Old Testament and the Bible.

These oral narratives have also served as a text from which religion and spirituality were later understood; as such, the culture of honour and shame is not just a proposition of the Atyap and their neighbours in southern Kaduna, but also a biblical one. In the Old Testament,

⁶⁶ Just as we are charged with the responsibility to care for the rest of God's creatures, we are also given the command to be fruitful and multiply, and have dominion over the rest of the creatures as rulers and as caregivers over them. Currently, an international issue that is urgent and burning at the desk of the United Nations is the subject of *Sustainable Development*. This research shows that it is not just a scientific issue but one which can be approached biblically and theologically based on Genesis 1:27-31. It goes to show that the sustainability of this cosmos and obedience to the laws of the land do not just bring honour to humankind but they also bestow dignity and praise on the creator of the universe.

cultural references that are also similar to this code of honour and shame are valuable for interpreting the Bible because Scriptures are to be read in different cultural contexts and made meaningful to the readers. There is now every reason for biblical scholars to revisit such neglected cultures to probe their usefulness as a frame of reference for biblical interpretation. Although they are not well known cultures, it can be seen from their stories that the southern Kaduna cultures have so much to render in the areas of respect as human dignity.

Westermann explains that in Genesis 3, the narrator implies that human beings allowed themselves to be led astray by simply gazing at the fruit leading to temptation by the devil. In the same way, the *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים* gazed at the beautiful women and fell into sin. Generally, humans are attracted to what is forbidden and at times, the law of prohibition draws us close to curiosity, seduction, and mysterious thoughts which may be irresistible⁶⁷ to the eyes or flesh. The senses of sight and taste are designed to work together to evoke a sense of desire in human beings and then lead to honourable or shameful decisions, as the case may be. In Genesis 2:25, the man and the woman were both naked and not ashamed, but in Genesis 3:7, they became ashamed suggesting that either they gained new knowledge of their nakedness (and they became guilty before God) or their sense of sexuality became more matured and enlightened about their relationship. Alternatively, it could be that the shame is a reflection of being unmasked or exposed. A sense of change had just begun in them in 3:22; they discovered it was shameful to be naked before others. The clothing or apron they invented was the awareness of a sense of social significance as in honour and shame, but it was honour and wisdom to them (Westermann 1984:248-251). The origin of sin in Genesis 3:6 and the origin of sin in Genesis 6:1-4 can be compared to the shamelessness⁶⁸ of human beings which can never be hidden from God. In Genesis 6-9, after the fall in Genesis 3, humankind was

⁶⁷ In like manner, there are three things that throw human beings off balance and into temptation –the lust of the eyes, the desires of the flesh and the pride of life. These three things landed the first couple and the sons of God in shame. The first couple took time to listen to the lies of the devil and they chose the counterfeit option to the real, they gazed at the fruit, appreciated it and desired to have some which led to their fall (shame), and affected all humanity. Adam was there with Eve in Genesis 3:6, and he probably allowed her to go ahead with the temptation because of love or because he was trying to please her. Similarly, the *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים* saw the beautiful girls in Genesis 6 and kept appreciating the image of God in them until the whole of them sinned by taken at random any woman they chose. That was one of the reasons the early Church discouraged all believers from anything sin or shameful.

⁶⁸ The fall of humankind in Genesis 3 is recorded as the greatest tragedy from the created state of innocence and fellowship with God to the state of sinful alienation. God had provided a perfect environment with every need fully supplied and no inherited sinful nature but a capability of resisting any external pressure to sin (Morris 1976:163-164).

disgraced and ashamed with nowhere to hide until God later created another order and stability on the earth.

In our contemporary times, people commit many shameful acts for which they try to provide some biblical backing even though; such acts were prohibited in the ancient world or the biblical world. This is possibly the reason the early church interpreted the fall as a shameful act that should not be heard of among believers. In the origin and creation stories, there was chaos as well as a struggle before the new beginning. It was in this confused state that creatures emerged and brought forth new things. Some of these stories had great impact and they were able to diffuse from one culture to another not only as story plotters but as plotted stories with specific actions and specific actors (Fritz 2004:55). Distinctively, the stories in the Old Testament used historical and historio-graphical elements to describe the past reality in a fictitious and persuasive manner by means of rhetorical elements to capture the reader's attention as well as teach meaningful lessons about human worth.

God's purpose in creating human beings in his image was primarily for his honour and glory. It is possible that this was where the gods got the idea that humankind was created to be their subjects. Although the Atyap and their neighbours ascribed their creation stories⁶⁹ to God and his spirits, the stories are similar to the ancient propagations. The ancient people said the gods created humans to assist and serve them and in turn, they would help humans. It is noted that the stories of Atyap and their neighbours promote human values and worth in the form of honour and shame especially their folktales, folklore⁷⁰ proverbs, songs, praises, festivals, and other customary practices that aim at building the community. Again, just as the Bible commands us to give honour to whomever honour is due, the Atyap and their neighbours do not honour a person just because of his or her religion, wealth, educational attainment or the family name but mainly because of the integrity and personal relationship the person maintain with others.

⁶⁹ In southern Kaduna, the Sun Nom, Num and Mam, like Amun Re of the ancient Near East, are symbols of God's presence which at times indicate the name of God. What is interesting here is that in the ancient mythology, the characters lack shame as younger gods have sexual relationship with their mothers to perpetuate the creation of more gods and they jointly overthrow the father god to continue ruling.

⁷⁰ The Hausa for instance perform female circumcision and late male circumcision while the Atyap and their neighbours do not. Instead, the Atyap circumcise a child between eight days and two weeks of birth. They differ mostly from the Hausa in the areas of religion, which also affect their traditional beliefs. However, one cannot deny certain influences of Hausa customs on the Atyap and their neighbours as a whole. Even the names of most of the groups have been changed by the Hausa, e.g. Akurmi (Kurama), Atyap (Kataf), Bajju (Kaje), Ham (Jaba) and Gwong (Kagoma).

There are virtues of dignity that lead to harmony, peace and unity as in Psalms 8, a little creature like the human being is regarded before God. In the same manner, the concept of honour and shame among the Atyap and her neighbours may be significant to other popularly known cultures of the world. It is needful for us to keep ourselves from shameful conducts and not to get entangled with things that lead to the loss of integrity and self-worth. It is also true that elders desire to be honoured and respected as much as the young, women and children, slaves, free, black or white. There is absolutely no reason why one created in God's image should deny a fellow human being the honour due to him or her because of prevailing religious, cultural, social, or political differences in a particular social milieu. We are all humankind created in God's image but it is crucial that we exhibit respect and value the image of God placed in humanity at creation. This is the way we will build positive character and dignity. In the next chapter, the stories of southern Kaduna will be compared to those of the Old Testament in particular Genesis 6:1-4 and the ancient Near Eastern texts to explain the function and significance of the stories.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN EXPOSITION OF GENESIS 6:1-4⁷¹

5.1 Introduction

Creation stories and myths in the ancient Near East and Old Testament are based on ancient stories related to divine and general revelation, and they should not be confused with scientific theories about the evolution of the world which emanated after the age of Enlightenment. The myths are referred to as cosmogonies and can be grouped into six according to their theologies namely creation from *nothing*; from *chaos*; from *cosmic eggs*; from *world parents*; through *a process of emergence* and through *earth divers*⁷² (Long 1987:94). The intriguing creation story or myth in Genesis 6:1-4 about the בני־הָאֱלֹהִים and the daughters of men is a chaotic one with various interpretations and readings.

The understanding of this myth has been an issue of debate for centuries and even today, it remains a text with various interpretations. Vander Kooij notes two perspectives on the interpretation of the בני־הָאֱלֹהִים in the text. The first is either as “judge” or as “great ones”, which is mostly attested in Jewish literature right from the second century AD. The second is the “sons of God” as “sons of Seth” and “the daughters of men” as “the daughters of Cain” who intermarried found in Christian sources particularly in the fourth century AD (Vander Kooij 1997:43-44). As we shall see later, others still refer to them as “angels”, “divine beings” or “deities” who bore the גַּבְרִים, some unusual divine-humanlike creatures who were identified as heroes and celebrities and seen as respected beings. These kinds of stories are regarded as myths not because they are made up but because they do not seem to be well connected like history; they are in fact fragmented and to an extent disconnected from reality.

⁷¹ This provisional pericope is in accordance with the textual demarcation in 5.4 below.

⁷² An earth diver has to do with the idea of creation emanating from the depth of the waters, where an animal goes into the primordial waters and uses sand/mud to build the earth. These kinds of stories are found mostly in Native American folklore, Yoruba stories in western Nigeria, Finno-Ugrian traditions and eastern Asian religion. In this process of creation, at times, suspense is created in the primordial realm and it is imagined that the animals dived into the waters that covered the earth, then they use the sand underneath or the mud to create the universe. In Genesis 1:2, a similar picture is painted – at a time when the earth was formless and void and waters were all over the face of the deep, the spirit of God moved upon the waters (www.cs.williams.edu/~lindsey/myth/myth-7.html).

In this regard, Brueggemann (1982:7) notes four reasons why the text is considered mythical. Firstly, it explains the origin of the גְּבֻרִים on earth as in Numbers 13:33. Secondly, the text belongs to the stories of respected heroes who lived between human and divine, as a way of overcoming the distance between God and humans but it contrasts with the salvation story in 5:29. Thirdly, the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in v.2 is a reference to the lesser polytheistic understanding of the cosmos, and lastly, its presence provides a basis for religious speculation in non-canonical literature such as Enoch 6:1-2, 7:2. It is obvious that mythical texts are best understood in the contexts where such stories were initially told or narrated because sometimes the meaning is based on the context from which it emanated.

The prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 40-55 speaks of Yahweh as the creator in a similar manner as the ancient stories which depict the creator as one who established, bore, made and brought forth the universe. Watts pictures Yahweh as distant from humanity, seated in Zion, seeing mankind like grasshoppers, and from there, he “stretches out the heavens and the earth”. He was able to “make, break, establish their powers”, and make them relevant (Watts 1987:92). According to Old Testament narrators, creation is the sole responsibility of God, the maker of nature and humankind (Israel), who created by speech and by the power of pronouncement declared what should be, and it was.

Brueggemann (1998:27) states that the exilic poet asserts the incomparability and singularity of Yahweh in creation and in his endless works as well as his energetic attractiveness to creation as a sustainer and giver of life to both the fainthearted and the powerful. Childs (2001:311) adds that the reality of creation is known everywhere but Israel in particular had to remember Yahweh as the creator and everlasting God who bore the earth. Yahweh created the sun, moon, stars as well as the light of the day and the darkness of the night. He made humans great and small and is still in the business of transforming the world in a creative manner using human beings (see Isaiah 40:28; 42:5; 45:8, 12, 18; 41:20; 43:1, 7; 48:7;51). Although Yahweh created human beings, he also respected them as responsible caregivers.

Similarly, in Mesopotamia, creation stories were linked to cities such as Nippur, Lagash and Shuruppak where the stories were narrated (Harrison 1975:1020-1023). Towner notes that the religion of ancient Mesopotamia (Sumerian, Babylonian, Canaanite and Ugaritic) and Egypt had great mythical traditions about the stories of gods who were involved in the act of

creation and procreation of the world. Their wisdom stories had a collection of proverbs and manuals for interpreting dreams, which is similar to the context where ancient Israel emerged (Towner 2001:3). It is important to note that no other single ancient myth or story about the beginning provided proper, coherent or detailed account of creation than the Jewish record found in Genesis 1-11.

5.2 Genesis 1-11

To create according to Schmidt (1997:253-255) is “to cut down”, “to clear”, “to cut into pieces” or “to divide”, which is derived from the verb בָּרָא. The term is not really a traceable development that clearly limits the idea to biblical creation. The verb does not describe “*creation ex nihilo*”, but refers to the fact of regarding creation as *ex nihilo*. On this point, Van Leeuwen explains that cosmogony⁷³ has to do with the verb “to create” or “separate” by cutting a thing, an idea which stands in contrast to the Old Testament theory of “creation by speech”. According to him, the ancient Near East texts describe creation through multiple gods or deities (Van Leeuwen 1997:728-729). In a recent review of Van Wolde’s work, Becking and Korpel note that she translates בָּרָא as “to spatially separate” and not “to create”, that is, basically “to cut or separate”. The Arabic root *br’* “to create” is possibly a borrowed word from Aramaic or Hebrew which is confused with “to cut off from by cutting into halves”, a term also used to describe a “covenant treaty”. She adds that it may belong to the semantic fields of “building or constructing” similar to Egyptian, Babylonian and Ugaritic concepts of creation, used to refer to the process of creating. She notes that “to differentiate or split” is taken as “to separate from” or “to differentiate into” which is how Yahweh “begets”, “bears” and “shapes” (building term) the heavens and the earth (Becking & Korpel 2010:1-8). One agrees that the main idea here is that creation was caused by some forces that put things in order whether by “cutting”, “making”, “establishing” and “separating”; it did not just emerge as in cosmogony; it was caused by a maker (creator God).

There are two creation accounts/stories in Genesis—the first is in chapter 1 and the second in chapter 2. Although it is not the emphasis of this research, it also helps to know that the

⁷³ Cosmogony is a term derived from the Greek word (*kosmos* and *genesis*) which means “the order of the universe” and “the process of coming into being”, “a kind of birth” which deals with stories, myths and theories of birth or creation of the universe or of its description (Long 1997:94). The purpose was for sustainable development in the relationship between God and mankind and also the procreation of humans and in their environment.

Jewish God took seven days to accomplish creation and to rest, it was this primeval act of establishing and making the universe that was designed and constructed by Yahweh through the art of speech known as “*ex nihilo*”, which is “to create out of nothing” **Genesis 1**. He created by commanding the things to be and they appeared. His power and might were shown right from the inception of the world and the beginning of civilization was also attributed to him as well.

Van Wolde (1996:2-3) notes that stories of the past usually have a beginning and Genesis shows both the series of events and the facts narrated about the past which define our human image, origin and experiences. Genesis itself is rendered as תולדות meaning fathering, begetting, belonging or generation; as a process of history in a series of transmitted experience – a sort of oral storytelling from one generation to another and mostly from parents to children.

Narrative elements are found in each story of creation in Genesis. The structure and characteristics of the book are unique. It begins with the primeval history, that is, the beginning of the universe and runs down to show the development of humanity and their environment. Driver claims that it comprises of the introductory period of the history of origin and the period of the lives of the ancestors of the Hebrews before ending with the death of Joseph in Egypt. It describes the origin of the universe as well as how human beings emerged and gradually inhabited the earth. His outline of the book shows that chs. 1-2 contain the creation records, chs. 3-5 relate the origin of evil and the beginning of civilization, and chs. 6-9 account for the flood and the rise of a separated nation. The second section (chs. 12-50) centres on the families of the three patriarchs (Driver 1904: i-ii). Brueggemann (1982:23) accepts a similar outline for the first section of Genesis but isolates 6:1-4 as a separate pericope. It is distinctively clear that Genesis 1-11 and 12-50 are two separate narratives—the first is on creation and civilization while the second is about stories of the patriarchs.

Genesis 1-11 contains creation stories/myths and legends about the beginning of the world and mankind. The aim of the writer for including the creation stories was to render God (Yahweh) as visible in the work of creation and show the cosmos as the works of his hands (Calvin 1847:58). Creation started with a state of primeval chaos in which the earth was

enveloped in a huge mass of surrounding turbulent waters and shrouded by darkness. The spirit of God brooded over the waters and caused order, and the earth took shape (Driver 1904:2). In comparing myths and legends, Skinner (1910: vii) states that myths are stories of the gods, originating in an impression produced from primitive minds by the more imposing phenomenon of nature, while legends attach themselves to the personages and movement of real history. Cassuto (1944:7) supports the claim that the aim of chapter 1-11 is to attribute respect to Yahweh by showing that the cosmos and its contents are created by one God.

Therefore, Genesis 1-11 is the unit that contains these interesting stories and narratives in which people lived longer than in our contemporary times, and it is the record of primeval history. Chapters 12-50 relate the story of a family that survived four generations and the fourth generation had to do with Jacob's children – the twelve sons of Jacob. This is the larger context of the creation narratives. The first and second theories of creation in Genesis 1-4 depict human relationship (vertically) with God growing sour and (horizontally) in chaotic situation with fellow humans as well as with other creatures. The plot continued all the way to 5:1-9:29 where human genealogy was introduced and it ended with the great flood story. The section also includes the myth of the בני האלהים and human daughters in 6:1-4 or 6:1-8, depending on the demarcation. The last section of the creation narratives is chapter 10-11 where the Nations, Babel and another genealogy of Shem's family were recorded. However, in chapter 6:1-4, we see a picture of honour and shame and in 6:5-8⁷⁴ the justice of God, which is how Yahweh resolved to destroy humankind with the flood.

In a different way, Wenham describes the origin of the universe and human ancestors in relation to Israel as progressive from the structure he outlines. He sees Genesis 1 as the origin of the world, 2-11 as the origin of the nations and 12-50 as the origin of the Israel. He further analyses the units thus: 1:1-2:3 – prologue, 2:4-4:26 – history of heaven and earth, 5:1-6:8 – family history of Adam, 6:9-9:29 – family history of Noah, 10:1-11:9 – family history of Noah's sons, 11:10-26 – family history of Shem, 11:27-25:11 – family history of Terah, 25:19-35:29 – family history of Ishmael, 36:1-37:1 – family history of Isaac and 37:2-5:26 – family history of Jacob (Wenham 1987: xxi-xxii). He uses family history to demarcate the whole book as the תולדות and to show a development from the start to finish.

⁷⁴ The narrator again portrays the evil and wickedness of humans in 6:5-8, focusing on the behaviour of human beings on earth, that is, on real life events among human beings. The passage is not related to the fictitious myth and story of ancient people. On the other hand, in 6:1-4, we see certain words and features that indicate the culture of honour and shame in ancient times.

Stigers (1976:33) believes that the תולדות are not just historical or literary elements, but that they separate the sections of Genesis and exhibit a “narrowing down of a scene of action” in the entire plot of the book. The תולדות show “this is what comes of it”, the things that happened, and the persons named but then, the story continues. The תולדות appear in the book in several places including 2:4, 5:1, 6:9, 10:1, 11:20, 11:27, 25:12, 25:19, 36:1, 37:2, and also in Ruth 4:18 and in the New Testament in Matthew 1:1. In another development, Westermann explains that the art of creation was not limited to the heavens, the earth and humanity; it was also about the establishment of order (respect) in the cultivated world. There was no separation between nature and civilization; the tool and product of civilization took theological meaning and the action of the gods included civilization and technological inventions. Once more, divine action and technology are linked to the blessings in the myth just as “Enhil and Enki” blessed the land of Sumer, where it is believed that civilization came from the תולדות of the gods (Westermann 1984:58, 60). In the Old Testament, civilization sprang from the genealogy of the human race but the ultimate meaning of creation is found in the heart and purpose of the creator.

5.3 The תולדות

Arnold (2009:4-9) points out that the final edition of the book of Genesis used a clearly discernible clause תולדות meaning generation, genealogy or history which is used to arrange the book into eleven panels of texts placed side by side within a continuous whole. The תולדות is used to introduce or indicate a new section of the book. The origin of the expression is most likely in reference to genealogies as in, “*these are the תולדות descendants of...*” which serves as an opening statement. The purpose⁷⁵ of choosing the pericope of Genesis 6:1-4 is to forge a link between the unit on Adam’s generations that sinned on earth and Noah’s generation which championed the flood story. The expression also functions as the opening statement for the new section and the origin of the גבורים. The term that indicates and designates the descendants or generation of a single person, though this pericope refers to the נפלים and how they came about while 6:5-8 states the flood was caused by human wickedness on the earth.

⁷⁵ Westermann (1984:381) argues that the purpose of inserting the myth was to show the contrast between the pagan myths and the new interpretation given by Israel. It is clear in Towner’s analysis that 6:1-4 tells of “The marriage of Angels and their Bizarre Progeny” which led to a pervasive tendency of human evil in 6:5-8 where “Yahweh regret(s) the behaviour of his creatures”. Since Adam sinned, Cain sinned and now the נפלים made the same mistake depicting shameful and disrespectful acts from able beings (Towner 2001:77). These were good reasons why the cosmos should be destroyed since its lovely creatures were no longer willing to exercise self-control over materialism and pleasurable desires or the challenges they encountered.

Blenkinsopp outlines the structure of Genesis 1-11 as 1:1-4:26 or 2:4-4:26 – “Heaven and Earth”; 5:1-6:8 – “Adam”; 6:9-9:29 – “Noah”; 10:1-11:9 – “Three Sons of Noah”; and 11:10-26 – “Shem”. In each of these sections (2:4a, 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10), there is a תולדה as explained above (Blenkinsopp 1992:59). Notably, Blenkinsopp does not use תולדה as an indicator in 6:1. However, some scholars prefer a different arrangement. For instance, Wenham’s outline is similar to Blenkinsopp’s but his headings are slightly different. Thus, 2:4-4:26 is “history of heaven and earth”; 5:1-6:8 is “family of Adam”; 6:9-9:29 is “family of Noah”; 10:1-11:9 is “family history of Noah’s Sons” and 11:10-26 is “family of Shem” (Wenham 2003:21). It is important to mention here that the use of the תולדה points to order and the way certain pericopes can be fabricated.

Once more, the תולדה are indicators or phrases used as markers of demarcation and many of them occur in 1-11. Similarly, in Genesis 6:1, though it is not a basic marker for sections and the structures in Genesis, its most frequent use was for descendants (genealogy) to introduce a list of names (Adam, Cain, Lamech, Seth, Noah and Shem). In some cases, it refers to history or narratives, as in the תולדה of heaven and earth (Whybray 1995:31-35). In 6:1, there is an indication of the starting point of the pericope, an indication of a new section with a different story from genealogy to divine and human relationship. In Genesis 6:1, the statement, “And it was, that when people began to increase on the earth and daughters were being born to them,” is also taken as a separate section. The author of Genesis seems to have carefully indicated the heading of the section using a similar kind of genre.

In the same way, God expects human beings to grow a respected and peaceful environment, to govern and multiply on earth as God desired. More recently, Brueggemann notes that the first eleven chapters are important but they are best known in a stereotyped way and frequently misunderstood due to the style of the literature. Furthermore, the world has been positively valued by God and it must be treasured by all the creatures to which it has been entrusted (Brueggemann 1982:11-13). Westermann (1984:17) explains that the genealogies do not speak of any special act of God, but helps to group the generation of people. The תולדה according to the Priestly tradition (P) were to indicate how God established his blessings on human beings and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. The effects of the blessing are stated in the תולדה dynamism of the new creation/birth. It is also repeated by various generations and succession of humanity to indicate respect and the greatness of the creator.

It shows that 6:1-4 is a section under the family of Adam. Its so-called תולדות beginning with ““And” it was, that when people began to increase on earth and daughters were being born to them...” indicates that it can be treated separately. Although a תולדות is also not clearly indicated in 6:5⁷⁶ to make it a section for discussion, it is clear that a new section has started with “Noah’s family” or “the flood” in 6:5 before the story about the relationship of the נְפִלִים with “the daughters of men”.

5.4 Demarcation of the Pericope of Genesis 6:1-4

Genesis 6:1-4 falls under the creation⁷⁷ narratives in the Pentateuch and appears also in a smaller context of the creation myths in Genesis 1-11. The limit of the text in question has been of interest to several scholars who have demarcated the pericope in different ways. That there are three possibilities or theories of textual limitation in Genesis 1-11 has not been a disputable issue. The only debate is the demarcation of the smaller portions within the story of Adam to Noah (chapter 1-11) or Adam to Babel (chapter 1-11). The first is demarcated as 5:1-11:23 or 6:1-11:32. The other two divisions, still being debated by scholars, are found within Genesis 6 as either 6:1-4 or 6:1-8. It is discovered that most scholars who demarcate the text from 6:1-4 are older scholars while most recent scholars settle for 6:1-8. However, it is important to note that the myth ends in vs.4 while vs.5-8 has to do with judgment.

In his sixteenth century commentary, Calvin (1847:235-262) did not limit the text but focused on the whole chapter. As early as 1904, however, Driver demarcated the text as 6:1-4⁷⁸ under the title בְּנֵי-הַאֱלֹהִים while in 1910, Skinner referred to the pericope as “The Origin of the נְפִלִים” and in 1944, Cassuto considered a similar heading as Driver’s. As time went on in the 1960s, Von Rad (1963) agreed with the demarcation as 6:1-4 and titled it “The Angels’ Marriages”. He also considered the text as a new section for discussion, while Speiser in

⁷⁶ This time, the author introduces human wickedness in 6:5-9:29 and in the flood story/myth. When compared, we see two issues beginning only with 6:1-4 as an example of the reasons for allowing the flood. A critical reader would place 6:1-4 under the flood as the beginning of the story; nonetheless, in this piece, it is treated as a separate pericope in order to portray the culture of honour and shame and differentiate it from the ancient myths/stories of creation in biblical narratives.

⁷⁷ Creation is popularly defined as “*ex nihilo*” meaning ‘created out of nothing’ which is the way the biblical traditions and other ancient stories of the beginning such as the popular Gilgamesh story see it.

⁷⁸ Stigers is one of those who demarcate the text as 6:1-4, possibly because 6:1 seems to indicate the beginning of an era or discussion (see Stigers, H.G. 1976. *A Commentary on Genesis*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House p.76). The argument is either 6:1-4 or 6:1-8 but a good look shows that Genesis 6:1-4 is a section on its own and vs. 5 is another story that is beginning to unfold. Although it has no תולדות, there is something new that is being introduced. Verse 5 is not a continuation of the myth; rather, it is a starting point of the next story (the flood). The text tries to compare the previous with the new which is a common thing in writing an introductory sentence especially by good writers.

1964 titled 6:1-4 as a “Prelude to Disaster”. It is interesting that most of these older scholars titled the text differently from later scholarship that views the heading of the text as Driver earlier proposed. Skinner noted that the fragment belonged to the class of aetiological myths. The belief in the *נְפִלִים* is attested in the tradition of a race of *גְּבֻרִים* who survived in historic times especially among the aboriginal population of the land of Canaan (Skinner 1910:140).

In the 1980s, the trend continued with Brueggemann’s demarcation of 6:1-4 as “The Genealogy of Cain”. He claims that it extends to the *בְּנֵי הַקְּאֵלָהִים* and it serves as the end of the creation testimony. Westermann (1984) does not change the limit but separates 6:1-4 from the former or later stories in the text (Adam’s/Cain’s genealogy and the story of the Flood of Noah). He however expands the text as *בְּנֵי הַקְּאֵלָהִים* and the *גְּבֻרִים*. For him, chapter 6:1-4⁷⁹ does not seem to have any connection to chapter 5 or any of the preceding materials, as it serves as the “prelude to the flood story”. The author shows an example of human wickedness in 6:5, but the short brief narrative in 6:1-4 is a curious one with much of the mythological tradition of the ancient Near East and the Old Testament (Brueggemann 1982:70-71).

Another reason⁸⁰ for choosing 6:1-4 is that it indicates the new face of activities on earth as well as the origin of the *גְּבֻרִים*. Lately, Sarna (1989) has also opted for 6:1-4 which he titles, “Celestial-Terrestrial Intermarriage” because it resembles a Greek mythology in which human and animals inter-marry but with hidden meaning. Blenkinsopp (2004) calls it “the spread of evil in Antediluvian world”, while Fretheim (1994) accepts Driver’s demarcation and title of 6:1-4. It seems that the choice of the title rests with the exegete even though the textual demarcation has varied. Scholars who opt for 6:1-8 are mostly recent commentators. Wenham in his 1987 *Word Commentary* begins the new trend by analysing 6:1-8 as a unit and titling it the “Spirit-Human Marriages and their Aftermath”. The aftermath is probably the reason he demarcates the text as 6:1-8. Others such as Matthews’ (1996) *New American Commentary* have focused on the text as the “Conclusion of Procreation and Perversion” for

⁷⁹ Beyond doubt, the narrator offers this foreign story in 6:1-4 to demarcate the end of Adam’s generation that sinned in Genesis 3 and the able family of Noah that led the flood in Genesis 6:5-9:29. This myth again is just an interlude introduced by the storyteller to create suspense and is an example of sin in the whole story.

⁸⁰ In a table by Brueggemann in his commentary on Genesis, Chapter 6:1-4 has no specific heading or place. Cotter (2003:49-54) in his commentary on Genesis *Berit Olam Studies in Hebrew Narratives and Poetry*, does not even comment on 6:1-4 in the entire work, possibly because he regards the text as strange and foreign to the literature. He only refers to 6:5 at a point as one of the reasons for the flood, to 6:7 as ‘God’s decision to destroy the universe’ and to the fallen ones as “angels”. In the New Testament, Jesus calls peacemakers in Matthew 6:9 ‘the sons of God’ just as the Sethites were characterised as peacemakers.

Matthews, the pericope of 6:1-8 is the end of Adam's genealogy. Towner (2001) conceives the text differently as "Two Causes for the Flood" but once more, Collins (2004) separates the text and follows Driver's title. More recently, Arnold (2009) in the *New Cambridge Bible Commentary* as also supports the 6:1-8 demarcations under the theme of "Divine-Human Marriages and Reasons for the Flood". An outline of scholars' demarcation of the initial unit of Genesis 6 is provided in the table below.

Genesis 6:1-4		Genesis 6:1-8	
Skinner	1910	Wenham	1987
Cassuto	1944	Matthews	1996
Von Rad	1963	Towner	2001
Speiser	1964	Arnold	2009
Brueggemann	1982		
Westermann	1984/1987		
Sarna	1989		
Van Wolde	1996		
Whybray	2000		
Kselma	2000		
Cotter	2003		

Fig. 3: A Table Indicating the Various Demarcations⁸¹ of the Myth in Genesis 6 in Old and Recent Research

⁸¹ The table indicates that the demarcation of the text in question is varied, probably due to the approach of each of the scholars and the title given to the text. Besides, the fact that some of them were historians, clergy, poets or theologians (evangelicals and liberals) also contributed to their approach to the text. R.N. Whybray 2000. "Genesis", in *Oxford Bible Commentary* Ed. Barton J. and Muddiman J. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 38-66. Cotter (2003: xxvi) focuses on 6:1-4 as a historic fiction, and claims that such stories are imaginative and fictitious. They are used to depict the past in a reconstructed manner using characters in a story form as mythological lore. It is interesting to note that Wenham (2003) demarcates the text as 5:1-6:8 but separates 6:1-4

The recent trend of demarcating the text as 6:1-8 has raised a diversity of opinions on the text, because 6:1-8 deals with two issues namely בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in vs.1-4 as well as “the beginning of the Flood” or the “Reason for the Flood” in vs.5-8. Scholars are still seeking consensus on the text, but in this research, it will be argued that 6:1-4 is a story/myth which fits better as a separate unit and depicts a community with respectable and standard practice of “honour and shame”. Our interest here is not in the flood story but in the mythical story which ends in vs.4, although it refers to the future disaster that was coming upon the earth due to human wickedness. On this note, the present study will demarcate the text as Genesis 6:1-4⁸² as most early scholars have done in order to focus simply on the myth as a story of the beginning. In fact, 6:1-4 is an example of corruption on earth. The beginning in 6:1 was a time of new things when a new face of the earth was emerging; the first one in Genesis 1 was also after a chaos just as the second one in this pericope.

Although when one brings both sections together as 6:1-8 it appears as the introduction to the flood story, a critical assessment of the text indicates that 6:1-4 בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is a distinct section that should be interpreted separately from vs.5-8⁸³ which is the introduction to the flood story. It is true that the תּוֹלְדוֹת of Adam starts at 5:1 and probably ends with 6:4 (the origin of the גִּבּוֹרִים), but a look at 6:1 shows that it has a beginning, though no תּוֹלְדוֹת is clearly indicated. Again, what is the connection between genealogy and myth? If Adam, Cain and Noah were real people of their time, as the genealogies indicate, then the so-called myths have some historical content. This brief but separate pericope highlights the issue of honour and shame in the stories as a clear practice. It is another way of looking at the culture of

and 6:5-8 in the commentary, which is different from his earlier demarcation in his 1987 *Word Commentary*. Similarly, Matthews later separates 6:1-4 from 6:5-8 in the *New American Commentary* and titles it, “procreation and pervasive behaviour”. Most scholars who extend the text to 6:1-8 say something different about vs. 5-8 or change the limit in subsequent works as Wenham (2003). Besides, the concept of honour and shame best fits into 6:1-4 because of terms such *increase, marriage, union, beauty, long life, giants, men of renown or name and heroes* as opposed to 6:5-8 which is about evil (*raah*), “sin”, “wickedness” and God’s change of mind. It is easier to relate 6:5-8 to the flood story than with 6:1-4. At times, narrators introduce strange stories, proverbs or songs in order to create suspense or clarify a point to the audience.

⁸² The text can be understood or conceived in the postexilic context but its content is preexilic because of its primeval history and the indication of the periods of ancient civilization and “cultural revolution”. Moreover, the mythical stories contain ancient features. However, the text can be read in the postexilic setting since the sins or evils committed in Genesis 6:1-4 are prohibited in any community and cannot be condoned even in contemporary societies especially in honour and shame societies. Again, the law of cause and effect dictates that if one commits evil, the person will face the consequences. In fact, the reason for the myth in this text is to portray indignity in the society whether then or now.

⁸³ Verses 5-8 indicate the aftermath of the wickedness of humans or the judgment God pronounced after telling the mythical story in vs.1-4. The question is, is this judgment pronounced by God due to the sin of humans in Genesis 1 or the sin of the sons of God in Genesis 6? The narrator had ended his story before pronouncing judgment in vs.5-8, and in 6:3, we see that God pronounced judgment due to the shameful acts of the sons of God (*men of name*) who inter-married with human daughters and produced giants.

respect as a form of human dignity which is similar to the culture of honour and shame in southern Kaduna.

Most mythical texts do not clearly demarcate between the heavens and the earth, for instance, even though each patriarch died, Enoch is reported to have lived even after his disappearance from the earth because he walked with God (Gen. 5:22-24). Lamech the hunter was described almost as one of the גִּבְרִים due to his gigantic stature and size. Hendel (2008:564-565) explains that the violent behaviour of Lamech is an example of the striking wickedness of humans on the earth, which was what prompted Yahweh to send the flood. Lamech boasted about being a murderer even greater than Cain his ancestor. Thus, the mythical example was to serve probably as a link to the event and to make the narrative flow. This brief curious unit is an example of the common mythology of the ancient Near East and the Old Testament text (Brueggemann 1982:70-71). As such, Genesis 6:1-4 can be interpreted as a separate pericope and not necessarily in conjunction with 6:5-8 in recent trend among scholars.

Therefore, the reason for this story/myth was to introduce the main narration about the future of the world as opposed to the disrespectful behaviour of the semi-divine creatures on earth and of the rest of humanity. The post-exilic myth was to exemplify the need for respect for fellow humans on earth. Actually, Genesis 6:1-4 can be seen as a reference to honour and shame in relation to the dignity of humankind. It does not imply that 6:1-4 has no connection to the surrounding chapters or to any material before and after it especially to 6:5-8. It may also not be considered as a prelude to the flood story as some scholars suggest. Rather, only 6:5-8 should be seen as the overture to the flood story. This illustration once more is relevant to human dignity research and a discussion of honour and shame.

5.5 Text Critical Analysis of the Pericope⁸⁴

The passage opens with the observation of the population growth of the human race on earth. The relationship between אָדָם⁸⁵ and the אָדָמָה is established and recalled in 6:1 at the time when humans began to increase on the face of the earth. In Vs.1, the use of the וַי governs the clauses (*halal*, *rabab* and *yalad*) as (3 masc. sg. perfect – *halal/ yalad* – is *qal* passive and

⁸⁴ The pericope of Genesis 6:1-4 is translated from two versions of the English translation to provide an almost closer translation to *The Interlinear Hebrew-Greek-English Bible* published by Hendrickson in 1976.

⁸⁵ The words *adamu* and *adama* which have been adopted in Hausa are also used with the same spelling as in the primeval story.

rabab is *hiph*). In Vs.2a, the object of the subordinate clause “daughter” is anticipated by making it the object of the main clause (Wenham 1987:136). In addition, Fretheim (1994:382)⁸⁶ compares the NIV of Vs.1, “When men began to increase on earth” with the NRSV, “When people began to multiply on the face of the ground”. In Vs.2, the NIV is rendered, “the daughters were beautiful and they married any of them” while the NRSV uses the word “fair” and adds that “they took them as wives for themselves”. In Vs.4, they had children who were “heroes” (NIV), and ends the phrase with “men of renown” (NIV) but the NRSV uses the word “bore”, and ends the phrase with “warriors of renown”. The NIV seems to have a better/clearer translation than the NRSV.

וַיְהִי כִּי־הִתְחַל הָאָדָם לָרֹב עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה וּבָנוּת לְדָוֹ לָהֶם^{87 1}

Καὶ ἐγένετο ἡνίκα ἤρξαντο οἱ ἄνθρωποι πολλοὶ γίνεσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, καὶ θυγατέρες ἐγενήθησαν αὐτοῖς.

Vs.1 – “And it was, that when people began to increase on the earth and daughters were being born to them”.

In **Vs.1**, the אָדָם (ἄνθρωποι) has a generic meaning and when used for the daughters of men, it also means “women in general”. The use of the expression גִּבּוֹרִים as “mighty men” (heroes) is accepted, also in the “sense of angelic beings”, but the term used for angels or heavenly beings is not the “sons of Seth” or any other assumed human name. In some *Mss* manuscripts, בְּשֵׁנִים is not pausal and causes the changes when used or read. Verse 4 shows that the word נִפְלִים comes from נָפַל “fall”, which also occurs in Numbers 13:33-34. Since they are tall, they could fall, literally, but as גִּבּוֹרִים they are children of the mixed marriage (Stigers 1976:96). Hamilton (1990:261) understands the imperfect verb here as having frequentative force which is already indicated in the LXX, and he portrays the scene as an on-going event.

The continuation and growth or development of the earth which are understood as procreation here can be considered part of the appreciation of God’s plans for humanity and the purpose of creation. The אֲדָמָה in **Vs.2** is not really a problem in both translations only that

⁸⁶ Fretheim, T.E 1994. “*The Book of Genesis*” in the *NIB* commentary, 382.

⁸⁷ וַיְהִי is a conjugative term used to connect a conversation, but it is mostly introduced by the scribes or the narrators to smoothen the flow of story.

the NIV is mindful of the audience. Further, Fretheim (1994:383)⁸⁸ states that the identity of the בני־הַאֱלֹהִים is one of the major problems in the interpretation of this text. One of the widely accepted views is that “they are divine beings of the heavenly court” which also appears close to the real MT and is applicable to other Old Testament passages such as Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Ps. 29:1 in the LXX as well as the Ugaritic text.

Some key terms and phrases in the NIV translation are crucial to this exposition. In **Vs.1**, the degree of increase as well as the numerical development that was envisaged in the community is not debated by most scholars and commentators. It is also agreed that the fact that daughters were born was an honourable way of obeying the command to be “fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). The question arises when trying to identify the sons and daughters or their families –are the sons of God/god or of men? In terms of translation, the NIV says, “men⁸⁹ increased in number” while the NRSV says “‘people’ began to multiply”. Clearly, both translations acknowledge the population growth of humans, that is, men and women on the face of the earth. The specification in the NIV’s translation of the word for “men” *ish* is interesting since the word could be used as a generic term for men and women or people as used in the NRSV.

וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ²

² ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων ὅτι καλαί εἰσιν, ἔλαβον ἑαυτοῖς γυναῖκας ἀπὸ πασῶν, ὧν ἐξελέξαντο.

Vs.2 – “The בני־הַאֱלֹהִים saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took for themselves wives from any of those they chose”.

⁸⁸ Fretheim, T.E. 1994. ‘The Book of Genesis’ in *NIB: A Commentary in Twelve Volume.s* Vol. 1. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 317-674. Fretheim is an Old Testament Professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minnesota and the author of many books including *Our Old Testament Heritage and Creation, Fall and Flood: Studies in Genesis*.

⁸⁹ The word for men is to be translated not interpreted nor its meaning used in the translation, otherwise it becomes a commentary not a Bible translation. It is often said that translators or interpreters are subjective at times because they opt for what is convenient for them as seen for example in the NRSV, which is a simplified translation for school children or younger believers.

According to Hamilton (1994:262-272), the reason for demarcating the pericope as 6:1-4 is to connect the genealogy of Adam and 6:2-4 and to summarize the story about the increase of Adam's offspring even though it also shows that human beings were fulfilling the command of God to multiply, fill the earth and subdue it in vs.1. The **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים**⁹⁰ in vs.2 were identified by most ancient readers as “angels” and like the LXX, most ancient texts translate the phrase as angels (heavenly not human beings) parallel to the “morning stars”, which is the same linguistically as in the Ugaritic text (*bn il*)⁹¹. The Canaanite mythology renders it as (*bn il*), that is, major gods in the pantheon which *El* is the head but in the Old Testament angels are members of the Lord's court. In the New Testament, II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 refer to the apostasy⁹² of angels even though the sin is not specified. The verse states that the *angelon* or *anarthrous*, angels sinned while Jude 6 states that they left their proper place and that as Sodom and Gomorrah, they (*tutois*) or gave themselves over (Jude 7).

In the Peshitta of Genesis 6:2, 4 attested in the ancient Mss, Ephrem the Syrian reads the Peshitta as the “sons of judges” and claims it literally means “sons of *alohim*”, as earlier found in two of the hymns he composed (Nat 1, 22 and *Leim* 11, 2). At some point, it reads **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** (Nat 1, 48) and the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** is close in meaning to the “people of God” used in the garment of Ephrem. Both the Peshitta of Job 1:6; 2:1 and of Genesis 6:2, 4 share the same meaning –“angels”. A particular Jewish exegete renders it as “judges” in Targ Onk of Exodus 21:6; 22:7, 27 and the Peshitta also translates it as “judges” instead of “gods”. Origen also rendered it as “judges” even though he claims that it could also be read as “sons of the great ones” to which Symmacus agrees (Van der Kooij 1997:44, 47-48).

The meaning of the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** as “angels” is one of the views among early Jewish exegetes as supported by 1 Enoch 6:2; Jubilee 5:1; LXX, Philo (De Gigants 2:358); Josephus' *Antiquity* 1:31 and the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qaphen. 2:1; CD 2:17-19). The New Testament in II Peter 2:4 and Judges 6-7 as well as some early Church Fathers including Justin, Irenaeus, Clement of

⁹⁰ The **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** were like the assembly of stars as in Job 38:7; I Enoch 6-11 and Jude 6-7 also show how the angels misbehaved (Hamilton 1990:262). Yahweh regretted the angels' craving for the women on earth in 6:7 and thought of destroying humankind on the face of the earth; therefore, he sent the flood.

⁹¹ The assembly of the gods in Ugaritic 7:1:3-4 renders (*bn il*) diversely as “*phr bn ilm, mphrt b nil* and *dr b nil*” while *El* is the father of the “sons of *El ab bn il*” (Matthews 1996:324).

⁹² The NIV ignores and flattens out the word rendering it as “in a similar way’... they gave themselves to sexual immorality”. The term *tutois* cannot be cities unless we have a case of gender, and if *tutois* is angels, then 6:1-4 is not marriage but rape, lust and fornication. Matthews claims that **הָאֱזָדִמָּה** should not be translated with any reference to gender but to humankind at large as in the NIV. The NIV sees the **גִּבּוֹרִים** and **זָפְלִים** as *heroes* while some other translations claim they are “mighty men” (Matthews 1996:323).

Alexandria, Tertullian and Origen all offer the same interpretation – “angels”. In Ugaritic literature, **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** refers to members of the divine pantheon and is somehow similar to the Genesis application. It was rejected subsequently even by rabbinic teachers while most Christians believe that the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** could be divine beings and antediluvian rulers, thereby, combining the angelic and royal meanings (Wenham 1987:139-140).

The word **בן** has a wider meaning in the Hebrew than in contemporary English usage. A parallel is seen in the Ugaritic and other Semitic mythologies. The New Testament LXX in no way refers to angels partaking in earthly marriages and having children, and Judges 7 refers to fornication and homosexuality, but Genesis 6:2 refers to a proper marriage which involved procreation. The Alexandrian text of the Greek Old Testament translates the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** as “angels of God” in the third century BC but the Septuagint LXX contradicts the Jewish claims. The early Targums and certain orthodox Jewish authorities follow the conservative view that the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** refers to “rulers of the Aristocratic class”. The LXX also translates **נְפִלִים** as “giants” which the KJV adopts but liberal critics claim that it means “those fallen from heaven” (Major nd: 3-7). The question remains, “who are the real figures or characters in this mythical story known as the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים**?”

For Walton, the **נְפִלִים** and **גִּבּוֹרִים** are “heroes” as in the NIV, but the Talmud and other rabbinic writings opt for “angels of God” while the Symmachus’ translation of the Old Testament to Greek renders it as “sons of the powerful”. The Targum Onqelos and Neofiti of the second and fourth century respectively also agree with this position (Walton 2003:794). The NRSV on the other hand interprets the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** as “members of gods”, an idea of the “heavenly council” which was probably of Canaanite origin. The expression also refers to various titles such as “heavenly beings”, “kings” or “Israel”, although the LXX renders it as “angels” in Genesis 6:4. In 1 Enoch, the “angelic” watchers are referred to as “the sons of heaven”. Three fragments of the Qumran Mss (4Q174) refer to it as a “royal messianic idea” (Donaldson 2009:336-337).

In **Vs.2**, both translations accept that the **בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים** “saw that the daughters of men” but they differ in their description of the ladies or girls (the NIV uses the word “beautiful” while the NRSV uses “fair”). Fairness and beauty could be used as synonyms but in semantics they could also mean different things, as beauty entails “physical and inner” appreciation of a

woman while fairness has “to do with only the physical description” of the colour of a person’s skin. In the NIV, we have, “they married anyone”, while the NRSV says, “they took wives for themselves of all”. Again, the NRSV interprets the each of the words instead of translating the actual phrase.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה לֹא־יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בְּאָדָם לְעֹלָם בְּשָׂגֵם הוּא בְּשׂוֹר וְהָיוּ מִמִּי מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה³

³ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ὁ θεός Οὐ μὴ καταμείνῃ τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς σάρκας, ἔσονται δὲ αἱ ἡμέραι αὐτῶν ἑκατὸν εἴκοσι ἔτη.

“And יְהוָה [not Elohim] said my spirit shall not contend with man forever in the erring, for he is flesh and his days shall be hundred and twenty years”.

In **Vs. 3**, יִדּוֹן remains unexplained. The Greek renders it (Οὐ μὴ καταμείνῃ), and the variant in the Mss between בְּשָׂגֵם and בְּשָׂגֵם shows uncertainty about where the verb or the combination of participles is. Instead, **Vs.3** is (3 masc. sing imperfect *qal* of *daran*), and the Greek understands it as διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτοὺς σάρκας (Westermann 1984:365). In Wenham’s (1987:136) opinion, the בְּשָׂגֵם applies to the expression “because”, and depending on the addition and changes made to the verb בָּשָׂ, it will take a different meaning⁹³.

The expression “My spirit will not abide with you forever” in **Vs.3** presents another problem in the text and NRSV reads “abide” following the LXX but the Vulgate fits this context well –the people are offspring of the union of the spirits. Again, if we translate “for they are flesh” as in the LXX, we see the reason why God destroyed humans (Fretheim 1994:384). **Vs.3** is rendered “the lord said” in both translations but while the NIV says, “My spirit will not contend with man forever for he is mortal”, the NRSV has “My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh”. Again, both translations translate the new duration of human existence on earth as “hundred and twenty years”, which was probably cut short because of the dishonourable way in which the בְּנֵי־הָאָדָמָה treated the women and of the lawlessness of the people in the generation that was emerging.

⁹³ Wenham (1987:136n) explains that, “בְּשָׂגֵם ‘because,’ either a compound particle + ב ‘in’ = ש ‘which,’ + גַּם ‘also’ or inf const שגג ‘to make a mistake’ + ם ‘their’ + ב prefix ‘in’ = ‘when they make a mistake’. The former is more likely, cf. the similar compound באשר ‘because’...”

הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ בְּיָמֵים קְדָמִים וְגַם אַחֲרֵי כֵן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם הַמָּה הַגְּבֻרִים אֲשֶׁר מֵעוֹלָם אָנְשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם

⁴ οἱ δὲ γίγαντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις καὶ μετ’ ἐκεῖνο, ὡς ἂν εἰσεπορεύοντο οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐγεννώσαν ἑαυτοῖς, ἐκεῖνοι ἦσαν οἱ γίγαντες οἱ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί. ⁹⁴

Vs.4 – “They were Nephilim on earth in those days and even afterwards when came in the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים to the daughters of men and bore for them children. They were heroes of old who existed from ancient times and warriors of renown”.

The נְּפִלִים in **Vs.4** were on earth in those days, and according to Numbers 13:33, the LXX and the Vulgate understand them as גְּבֻרִים who also had offspring of angels after their marriage here on earth. In Greek mythology, the גְּבֻרִים were the product of an earthly and heavenly union (Wenham 1987:143). Westermann (1984:369) also explains that:

It is easy to recognize the myth⁹⁵ that underlies 6:1-4; it is a myth concerned expressly with primeval time and its leading motif was the elevation of the *genus humanum* as a group by super-men or semi-gods who were the fruit of the union of gods and women... It must be admitted that even before J inserted 6:1-4 into his work, myths of this kind were narrated in Israel.

It is interesting how translators and scholars struggle with this text in its entirety. It appears also that recent scholarship tries to cover up the idea of shame and disrespect in the text and portray only the respect and the honour. That is why the meaning of the נְּפִלִים in **Vs.4** and of אָדָם in the text are changed, so that they are seen as “sons of Seth” and “Cain’s daughters”. Speiser sees בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in **Vs.4** literally as divine beings, and the term (*elohim*) as different from Yahweh, while the daughters are human daughters literally united with the divine

⁹⁴ *Septuaginta: With Morphology*. 1996, c1979 (Gen 6:1). Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft.

⁹⁵ From vs.4, the story is associated with the revolt in heaven which was followed by the casting out of these beings from the heavenly realm and which led to conclusions regarding the demonic sphere. Since they were on earth, it is possible that the flood destroyed them as well. It should be noted that Genesis 11:7 suggests that the heavenly council returned to its proper working order after the flood, meaning, the evil and the angel-like beings were not destroyed (Fretheim 1994:384). The root of the words interpreted does not correspond with recent meanings; they only tried to let the text read smoothly. However, even if the expression refers to Seth and Cain’s children, it suggests that able characters were the standard in the community of God’s people; therefore, the act was foreign and unholy and should not be mentioned among them. Genesis 6:1-4 refers somewhat to an expanded genealogical item with an etiological goal (see Westermann, 366). It is no longer a myth but interpreted as an aspect of history in the narrations of the context.

beings in cohabitation. The גִּבְרִים are the heroes of old (NIV) but “giants” in the LXX and NRSV. In Greek mythology, the gods were connected to a hierarchy of pantheons. Uranus the sky god fought his children but was defeated by his son Cronus who was also vanquished by his own son Zeus. Later, the battle continued with the titans, the equivalent of גִּבְרִים (Speiser 1964:44-45). This point will be discussed further in the next sub-section in the interpretation of the culture of honour and shame (respect) in this story/myth.

Vs.4 is translated in like manner except for a few words or phrases as “the daughters of men and had children by them” (NIV), and it is “the daughters of humans, who bore children to them” (NRSV). Here, “men” and “humans” could mean the same but their root words are different, the question then is, how did the NRSV arrive at its translation? It is actually easier to understand because it is for younger people or believers and it is simpler. Both translations conclude with a reference to “heroes of old”. The NIV reads “men of renown”, and the NRSV, “warriors of renown”. Truly, warriors were men but not all men were warriors in those days. Only respected and honourable people were referred to as “men of name”.

5.6 Translation⁹⁶

Vs.1 And it was, that when people began to increase on the earth and daughters were being born to them. **Vs.2** The sons of God (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took for themselves wives from any of those they chose. **Vs.3** And YHWH (יְהוָה, not *elohim*) said my spirit shall not contend with man forever in the erring, for he is flesh and his days shall be hundred and twenty years. **Vs.4** They were Nephilim on earth in those days and even afterwards when came in the sons of God (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) to the daughters of men and bore for them children. They were heroes of old who existed from ancient times and warriors of renown.

a. Literary Aspect of the Text: Vs.1 – “And it was that when men began to increase in number on earth and daughters were born to them”.

The quotation is a reference to a period in the history of humankind when the society experienced a drastic change in population which led to the circumstantial births of heroes also referred to as the גִּבְרִים. The numerical population⁹⁷ growth of the people is remarkable

⁹⁶ The personal translation here is similar to the NIV; hence, the preference for this version in this study. Besides, the NIV is clearly written and easy to understand, and my additions are few, as in the previous ones above.

⁹⁷ Increase is an indication of development in a society which is a good thing, but when it is not concurrent with the available resources, it could lead to disorder, shame, poverty and corruption. This is currently an issue on the desk of the UN under family planning. It is estimated that very soon, the Nigerian population will increase

especially also the sizes of the people that were born at that time and the fact that the society was developing vs.1. An honourable and respectable thing was beginning to happen in the society when glorious and healthy “good looking offspring” were being born. No one likes to have a dwarf for a child or experience stagnation in life unless it comes from God. Thus, the change that was taking place in the society was a welcome idea especially as it had to do with the family, clan or tribe. “Change”, they say, “is constant” but the failure to maintain and control the population could lead to signs of disrespect and shame (e.g. poverty).

In **Vs.2**, the beautiful daughters and the handsome young men corrupted and brought shame to the land when they chose partners on their own and married on their own. The fact that they “saw” and they “chose” according to the text is an indication of a lack of self-control or respect. They were seeking external beauty (“fairness”) instead of “inner character or beauty,” as in the case of Isaac and Rebecca. Calvin says that Moses did not distinguish the **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** from the “daughters of men” because he considered them to be “of dissimilar nature, or of different origin; but because they were the sons of God by adoption... while the rest remained in their original condition”. The expression **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** is an honourable title that was why Moses reproved the people’s ingratitude and prostitution, that is, they did not make their choice from those possessed with the necessary endowment but wandered without discrimination based on their lust (Calvin 1847:238-239).

In African traditional societies, such acts of disrespect would result in punishment by banishment or curse on the family, their generation or the particular people involved. It is shameful when a highly honourable class intermingles abusively with others; it was degrading and a high-level of corruption when the **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** randomly took wife for themselves, impregnated them and they gave birth.

It is indicated in **Vs.3** that “God’s spirit will not contend with” human’s. Thus, discipline and divine checks and balances were adopted, and human lifespan was then shortened to “one hundred and twenty years”. It is a shame indeed that we no longer meet God’s expectation of holiness. It is clearly stated that human beings could live up to 700, 800 or 900 years. Methuselah lived up to 969 years in Genesis 5:21-27, though he shamefully accomplished nothing if compared to King Solomon who acquired great wisdom and success in the short

drastically as in the case of Indonesia, India or possibly China. Sons (children) are heritage from God, but only good character is honourable to the family, and important to the clan or the community.

time he lived. However, even if our years on earth have been reduced, we can still make good use of our time since the age of Methuselah was nothing compared to the wisdom of David or Solomon.

The last verse in this pericope (Vs.4) indicates that the נְפִלִים were on earth in those days (Numbers 13:33; Job1:6, 2:1). The contention was that they were respected beings at that time, even to the extent that they were worshiped and described as “heroes of old” or “men of renown”. However, they soiled their hands in harlotry and promiscuity which displeased God. It appears that the myth/story in 6:1-4 is a unit on its own written to illustrate respect and to explain the cause of the flood as a warning to the reader. Right from creation, Yahweh has been a God of order who cherished holiness and obedience, and often times, he bestowed blessings on his holy and obedient followers. It is categorically wrong therefore to condone the corrupt act of the נְפִלִים or the “heroes”, the corrupted בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים.

The נְפִלִים and גְּבֻרִים are mentioned again stating their presence on earth as opposed to their heavenly dwelling. The presence of the נְפִלִים on earth was a sign of honour, security and protection and anyone would be proud to associate with them in their community. The term נְפִלִים is from נָפַל meaning to fall probably due to the fall of humanity in the text where it is employed. The verse ends the short story of the relationship between the gods and the human daughters on earth, a kind of unorganized marriage which resulted in the unusual children, the גְּבֻרִים.

Driver (1904:82) is of the opinion that the race of the גְּבֻרִים arose through an unnatural union between the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and “the daughters of men”, an unlimited development which was controlled by divine intervention. He explains that the intention of the author was to state the cause of human corruption. It is understood as a piece of actual history with an assumed explanation. Speiser (1964:44-45) adds that literally the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים means “divine beings”, the term refers to *elohim* not to Yahweh. The expression the “daughters of men” contrasts with the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים. They cohabited with and had experience with “the daughters of men”. As “men of renown” who had respect and a name to protect, they failed. Men of renown are distinguished honourable creatures who should also distance themselves from carnal relationships that are not recommended.

Brueggemann (1982:71) also states that the narrative has etiological motifs which were used to explain the reason for the presence of the **גְּבֵרִים** on earth. The story has parallel stories of “heroes” who were characters that lived between humans and the divine, as a way of overcoming the distance between God and humanity. The **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** are lesser gods in the polytheistic understanding of the world. Similarly, Westermann claims that this description was the beginning of a confession which has not been eradicated even today. The importance of the translation as “angel” for the history of interpretation is that the writing was possibly meant for the Christian churches. Whether **בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים** meant “gods” or “men” could be established from the Hebrew word used for “angels” and for “Sethites” (Westermann 1984:365). Determining the actual word and its meaning is the best way to ascertain the correct interpretation of the creatures involved in that act of respect and disrespect to humanity (honour and shame).

Wenham (1987:136) points out that the section where 6:1- falls is the family history of Adam, but it appears to have little connection with the preceding genealogy. The key word that appears in a multiple of six or seven are represented in **Vs.3** (“man”, “the lord”, “God”, “sons”, “daughters”, “make” and “create”). Chapter 6:1 introduces the story of the daughters often mentioned in passing in chapter 5, despite their irrelevance to the genealogical line. The opening phrase “when men began to multiply” could be a reference to the whole process of multiplication recorded already as genealogy in 5:1-32. Again, Fretheim (1994:382) claims that this fragment may reflect a mythical root, yet very little help has been found in such comparative work. The text has been assigned to J traditionally but links to P materials can be discerned.

5.7 Verse-by-Verse Reading of Genesis 6:1-4

Vs.1 – “And it was, that when people began to increase on the earth and daughters were being born to them”.

This verse is a reference to the time when the human population on earth experienced some rapid growth, children increased in number, and people rejoiced in their pleasurable acts. The word **אָדָם** stands for humanity in general, as an inclusive term for equality. The problem surfaced when “men” began to multiply and the race of **גְּבֵרִים** was produced through the

wrong means of unusual union between the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and the “daughters of men”. It was an unlimited development that had to be controlled by divine means (Driver 1904:82).

The opening statement in **Vs.1** is an indication that the multiplication of humans in Genesis 6 is a continuation of the story of creation that started at the beginning of Genesis. Cassuto (1944:291) points out that the word אָדָם literally means “man” and could be applied as a common noun in a collective sense. Hence, at the beginning of the first paragraph, the pronoun appears to be in a singular and then in plural, thereby establishing a connection. Stigers confirms that הָאָדָם in vs.1 is a collective term for “men” or for humanity in general. The word was used later to refer to women as daughters of human beings, signifying women in general. The identity of two groups, בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and angels, is due to the use of the word in Job 1:6 and 38:7 (Stigers 1976:97). It has been clarified that **Vs.1** is an indicative statement about the extent of human growth, and the threats to the future development of the community was being projected. Westermann (1984:370) describes an action that started in an event here that is constantly going on; as the expansion of humans that is being discussed.

Further, the clause describes an on-going situation, and the multiplication of human beings is what forms the background to the new action (Wenham 1987:138). On the other hand, Hamilton (1990:261) claims that **vs.1** is a link to the genealogy of Adam, and it serves as an introductory sentence to the division as well as a summary of the story of the rapid increase of Adam’s progeny and the flood. The story begins with a reference to an event in the past which became shameful to the community. It is easy to hide in the crowd and commit a crime in today’s world where there are many people, but in a community with fewer people, one would easily be found out and caught. The statement at the beginning of the verse indicates a starting point of evil or unwanted behaviours from the people. It seems the author was concerned about the contradictory involvement of the creatures on earth that was why he took time to explain the origin or cause of the flood on earth, because that things like that did not just happen ordinarily.

Vs.2 – The sons of God (בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים) saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they took for themselves wives from any of those they chose.

The major problem in Vs.2 was where the unnatural relationship took place between the בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים and the daughters of humankind. When the בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים “saw” that the women were beautiful, they “took” or “inter-married” them, as they “wanted”, “desired”, “lusted or chose”. Calvin’s (1847:239-240) did not deem it fit to condemn the בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים for appreciating the women’s beauty because it is required to appreciate a woman before choosing a partner; the problem was the lust that motivated their relationship. Marriage is a sacred institution established for companionship not for lustful intentions and the satisfaction of pleasurable desires. Driver (1904:83) seems to imply that they dealt with the women as they pleased. The בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים saw the women and appreciated them, as beautifully and wonderfully made in the image of God. They married them by grabbing them randomly instead of through dialogical arrangement and agreement between two parties. The personalities of the women and the acceptable process of forging a union were not respected or valued according to the culture of that setting.

Skinner (1910:141-142) believes that the בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים were probably members of the divine order, called מַלְאָכִים. These supernatural beings became attracted to the beauty of the daughters of mortal men and succumbed to a permanent marriage contract. The angels were not called בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים because they had received the nature of God in them though they were created, but they failed to keep the level of holiness that was expected of them as members of the heavenly court of God. They were only interested in the instant satisfaction of their sexual desires. The name בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים also appears to be a reference to humans – the “Sethites”.

For Cassuto (1944:291-295), in ancient and modern exposition, the expression בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים is used for a distinct group of human beings and used in contradiction to the daughters of men, who were also mere human species as a whole or entities outside the sphere of humankind. The term occurs in reference to the identity of “angels” *malachum* which is also the oldest interpretation in the history of this exegesis. The women were beautiful or “good in appearance” and the בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים married any of them whom they chose. The *mem* refers to “all” or anyone they selected. The Torah refers to the union as opposite of the order set by the Lord.

If they were angels as stated in the Septuagint, they would have been called *malecha elohim*, meaning messengers of God, but the use of the term “holy ones” (בְּנֵי־הַמַּלְאָכִים) or children of

God) was probably for the Sethites, who were created in the image and likeness of God, and possessed some wisdom and nature of אֱלֹהִים.

The main concern here is the picture of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים in Vs.2, where the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים “saw” the daughters of men and rushed to pick them as wives. In this verse is found the collective decision of the so-called בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים who misbehaved. On the question of their identity whether as “angels”, “judges”, “warriors”, “גִּבּוֹרִים”, “heroes” or “divine beings”, the evil they committed was what made them into negative limelight. It helped to establish the fact that an unwanted relationship took place between the daughters of Cain and the sons of Seth.

Stigers (1976:97) notes that הָאָדָמָה is a collective term for “men in general” and “the daughters of men” stand for “women in general”. Just as in every age, they looked and beheld fair women and freely they took them as wives for themselves; wives of unbelievers. It seems to imply that they were not humans but angel-like in nature. For Westermann (1984:370-372), beauty does not exist abstractly unless seen or discovered. . He accepts the opinion that designates spiritual beings or angels as members of the divine order. Following Gunkel, he agrees that the “beings” belonged to the category of *elohim* and not to a religion. His conclusion was not clear although he classifies the text as mythical in purpose. The story tells how the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים did something that is typical of humankind.

Wenham offers three interpretations of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים. They could be non-human, godlike beings such as angels, demons or spirits, superior men such as kings or rulers, or godly men, probably the descendants of Seth who exhibited contrary traits to the godless descendants of Cain. Modern scholars advance the view that they were heavenly, godlike creatures from Psalm 29:1 and Job 1:6, but that the creatures in the Genesis 6:1-4 narrative are hard to describe (Wenham 1987:139-141). Sarna (1989:45) seems to support the position that they are angel-like beings. He claims that they resembled a celestial entourage based on some biblical verses.

Like Wenham and Westermann, Hamilton (1990:262-265) also states that it is not really clear who the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים were, but that they could be angels, dynastic rulers or godly Sethites. He notes that in other places in the Old Testament, the term בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים was used for heavenly beings (Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Psalm 29:1, 82:6,89:7 and Daniel 3:25), and it is most likely that angels constitute the heavenly council or court. The בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים is an enigmatic phrase used to

portray godliness in the context. It was the Sethites who lived godly lives, and were called בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, being characters which had the tendency to engage in human, pleasurable and shameful sexual relationships.

Vs.3 – “And YHWH (יְהוָה not Elohim) said, ‘My spirit shall not contend with man forever in the erring, for he is flesh and his days shall be hundred and twenty years’”.

In **vs.3**, Calvin noted that the degree of wickedness ought not to be found in the land; therefore, he introduced God as the speaker, and pronounced that the intolerable depravity of the world was incurably beyond any remedy. He explains that God was no longer willing to allow his spirit to be held captive by humanity, as God’s spirit was the Judge within humankind (Calvin 1847:241). Driver (1904:83) is of the opinion that “my spirit” represents an ethical principle on God’s part and the clause, “will not contend with man forever,” meant human days as “flesh” in the time before the judgment would be limited to one hundred and twenty years. Skinner (1904:141) agrees that vs.3 refers to an impending judgment on the human race which was later fulfilled in the flood as an expiry of the allotted terms. It was due to what has happened in the preceding verse that God decided to punish humanity. He limited the time-span for his spirit with humans and reduced their number of days on the earth to one hundred and twenty years. People would be dying at a tender age unlike in the ancient times. It is possible that the level of happiness was also reduced knowing that one would return to God between the ages of seventy and hundred.

Cassuto (1944:295-297) explains that the statement, “the Lord said”, is a decision that shows when he resolved that, “my spirit will not contend with man forever”, the verb “abide” (*yardon*) means a couch or bed as *dananu*, *dinnu* or *madnanu* in Akkadian. It carries the sense of existing or remaining perpetually in a given place. The spirit of life which God breathed into humans would no longer abide forever, and the children or the offspring of the evil union would not be immortal like their fathers, but they would die when the time stated arrived. Since humankind is “flesh” (*bosaggam*) or humans are creatures that have the tendency to err even though they transcend other creatures on earth, they remain in the “flesh” like the other creatures. This negotiation shows that the creator loved the creatures even in their wrongdoing; what God hates is the bad behaviour not the individual in question.

Another interpretation by Stigers (1976:98) is that *yadon* is “to strive”. It means God will not forever bear the consequences of human sin and the use of *bosaggam* (“in going astray”, “in as much as” or “for”) indicates that humankind as a finite being. Again, we do not understand it but seems to assert that God remains the provider and sustainer of humans on earth (Brueggemann 1982:72-73).

Vs.3 is a judgment pronounced on humankind. Wenham points out that almost every word in this verse is controversial. However, it seems that the divine-human relationship or intercourse was compared to eating the tree of life in the garden in Genesis 3:22. “My spirit” represents the breath of life or the spirit of life; therefore, the withdrawal of the spirit would be sudden and all human beings would die some day. The “one hundred and twenty years” specified the new time limit for humans on earth. Humans and animals are described as flesh but not God; therefore, the flesh perishes without the continual dwelling of the spirit and it returns to dust. Flesh also indicates moral weakness and propensity to sin (Wenham 1987:141-142; see also Westermann 1984:373-374)).

Although before this event and even after the pronouncement people lived longer, the life force from God determined the life and death of any individual. The verdict is seen in the phrase, “will not abide in man forever” due to the disorder in God’s creation (Sarna 1989:46). In addition, it was God’s decision to withdraw his spirit (Hamilton 1990:267). If God wants to take a decision to do something to/for his creatures either in the form of a blessing or calamity, he does what he deems right and does not need human view.

Vs.4 – “They were Nephilim on earth in those days and even afterwards when came in the **בְּנֵי־הַגִּבּוֹרִים** to the daughters of men and bore for them children. They were heroes of old who existed from ancient times and warriors of renown”.

Calvin explains that the reference to the **גִּבּוֹרִים** on earth in vs. 4 indicated the presence of some beings that were stronger than the rest of the creatures who relied on them for protection. The use of **נָפֵל** was probably due to the fall of those heroes who were robust in stature and fell into sin or fell from their position of responsibility in heaven where they stood. The use of (*vegam*) is to emphasis the size of their physical structure, as offspring of the promiscuity relationship between the **בְּנֵי־הַגִּבּוֹרִים** and human daughters. The **גִּבּוֹרִים** also had a peculiar origin; but those born from the unnatural relationship became examples to others just as the

mighty men of old or of antiquity *olam*. They were men of renown according to Moses, and they “boasted as honourable robbers” because they were greater than the common humanity. Their position bestowed on them some glory and honour as celebrities and titled men who were “heroes”. They exercised dominion, power, and fame and might in oppressing other creatures which led to disgrace because they were men adorned with gifts from God (Calvin 1847:244-26).

In contrast to their titles of honour, their shame came as a result of their wickedness and crime. Driver (1904:84) notes that the נַפְלִיִּם were also mentioned in Numbers 13:33 as members of a giant race which lived in Canaan at the time of the exodus, and in whose eyes the spies were likened to “grasshoppers”. They were ancient men of prowess and renown in Hebrew folklore, and doubtless deeds of insolence and courage were attributed to them. The existence of גְּבֻרִים alone was scary and when related to the gods, it was taken that they were honourable creatures, which were either divine or semi-divine in nature. It is on this note that most scholars related them to angels but actually, they were not referred to as (*malekim*) but נַפְלִיִּם and גְּבֻרִים.

Predictably, Cassuto analyzes the נַפְלִיִּם as giants who fell and the גְּבֻרִים as mighty men. The word גְּבֻרִים was used often in legends concerning angels who fell from heaven and since the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים were greater men or human princes, they became the *bene rabhehaya* (“sons of great ones” or “sons of judges”) who were born before the flood in the land of the living. In the “men of “name”, “respect” or “renown” *hassem*, the *shem* means name, not Noah’s son. Several myths existed at that time about the sexual union of gods and human daughters which produced creatures which were half gods and half-human, and were regarded also as deities. Among the Canaanites, such stories were told and even some poems in Ugaritic inscriptions implied that *El* married two daughters of men and gave birth to divinities. This is possibly a surviving fragment of the mythological saga of the ancient Near East that was preserved in the book of Genesis as a pagan legend (Cassuto 1944:298-300). The reference communicates the existence of the גְּבֻרִים but does not give a clear description of them, as it mentions only their magnitude and type.

Again, since *naphal* is not a word for angels or a word for judges, how come it is viewed as angels or judges by some scholars? There is a great gap in time and space between the use of

נְפִלִים in Numbers 13:33 and its occurrence in Genesis 6:1-4, and shows no relationship between the two. The reference in Job 1 and 2 preferably refers to ancient times. The mention of נְפִלִים in Ezekiel 32:20-27 indicates that they fell as mighty men as in Genesis 6:1-4. Westermann (1984:378) explains that, “Only later in the context of history was Nephilim used to designate giants, a group of people particularly tall, wherever they happened to be”. At times described as mythical beings⁹⁸ or semi-gods, similar to Gilgamesh description of the Creatures as partly gods and partly human or to Babylonian and Greek myths of creation, they were the fruits of the union of the gods and the beautiful daughters of men. Possibly such myths were narrated to depict the honour that such beings deserved.

The use of נְפִלִים shows that vs.4 is related to vs.1 and 2. The use of *gigantes* in the LXX also suggests that the marriage was possibly of angels, and the נְפִלִים refers to “the warriors of the olden days”, indicating a long time in remote antiquity. This is to say they are humans of famous names and background (Wenham 1987:143). Hamilton is of the opinion that they were the bastard offspring of the union between the god-like creatures and the daughters of men who were compared to the Anaks, that is, in reference to those who fell on their own or by the natural means of death. They begot the mighty men *hagibborim* which is also interpreted as old beings (*me olam*) – men of reputation or famous celebrities. He compares the creatures to the great builders of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:4 referring to them as “men of name” (Hamilton 1990:269-271).

In most cases, women who were achievers were celebrated and anyone who related with them saw himself as one. This was possibly the reason they married just any of the women. Since all of them were beautiful and good looking, trying to select a wife in such a situation would only lead to confusion. Therefore, they simply took them. Matthews identifies the נְפִלִים⁹⁹ in the fallen relationship with the נְפִלִים which means miscarriage, since they were expelled from the heavens. Numbers 13:33 also indicates that their descendants survived the flood. They were later compared to the Anakites (גְּבֵרִים or giants), who were also identified as

⁹⁸ This kind of stories existed among the Egyptians who they described the birth of Pharaoh. In Phoenicia, the story of the Ouranus and Gaia is told in the Hurarian myths as seen in Hittite texts. Stories of giants also existed among the Arabs and Germans. In primeval histories, such stories were not just Jewish inventions but an ancient Near Eastern belief and tradition.

⁹⁹ Stigers (1976:99) is of the opinion that the reference to the נְפִלִים is to show that they contributed to the increase of wickedness and corruption even as “famous men “ and that the mysterious marriage emphasizes the degenerated and shameful act that entered into the world. Though they were not well understood, instead of attracting respect they ended as men of dishonour who did not care about the norms of their community or what their witnesses would say about them.

the rebellious angels who fell out from heaven or who were thrown out of God's presence. The question again is whether the *נְפִלִים* and the heroes are the same. He however adds that there is no intention to compare the *נְפִלִים* of Moses' days and those of the ancient times (Matthews 1996:336-339).

The *נְפִלִים* sought a bad name through their behaviour though they were respected warriors, renowned, reputable and honourable, having a *shem* or great name. Therefore, the *נְפִלִים* were taken as the children of God or the *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים* comparable to the daughters of men. They were the heroes of old as the "Sethites" or sons of Seth who disrespected the daughters of Cain. It is possible to accept this view of the *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים* as "Sethites" for the following reasons:

(a) The semantic meaning of the key words such as *נְפִלִים* and *גְּבֻרִים* does not imply a definition close to "angels", even though the fallen angels were probably on earth in those days (Numbers 13:33; Job 1, 2). They could have been regarded as "angels" in those days but in this research, they would be viewed as "Sethites".

(b) "Angels" and "judges" are respected beings as such they could be used interchangeably, but the word for angels is not even found in the text or around it nor is it close to it in meaning, while the word for judges is "*shephatim*" and could mean spiritual beings.

(c) Spiritual beings do not marry neither do they have emotions or feelings towards the opposite sex or give birth to children. They were created in legions by God and do not need to multiply. Moreover, in the period of the patriarchs, there were no judges in the land yet; judges were either later ideas or postexilic references.

(d) The fact that such myths existed in the ancient Near East context around Egypt, Mesopotamia and other areas that narrated their primeval histories indicates that Genesis 6:1-4 is a myth in the ancient context.

(e) The "Sethites" were respectable sons that were characterised with honour and good conduct. As such, they could be referred to as "great people", "heroes", "men of name" or "men of renown". In the New Testament, the gospel according to John shows that true "disciples" of Christ are rightly called *בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים* (John 1:1). The "Sethites" were the closest

group of people to the daughters of Cain who could easily have fallen into such temptation of taking women to satisfy their lustful emotions. The lust and the illicit behaviour could only be attributed to human beings and not spiritual beings such as angels (גַּבְרִיִּים or divine beings); hence, these beings were the “Sethites”.

a. Historical Aspect of the Text:

It is popularly assumed that Moses was the author of Genesis including the pericope of 6:1-4 but it is also difficult to believe that he compiled the events before his grandfather was born. Possibly, he got the information from the Annals of History and the records of Jashar in Israel but that would then be second-hand or third-hand information which might have also undergone changes in translation. In Chapter 6:1-4, a classification of myths which is grouped under the Canaanite mythology similar to the ancient Near East belief system of gods is observed. Myths are stories about God/gods which are usually incomplete in narration or somehow do not make sense in the hearer’s reality but have a feeling of being real.

The purpose of this myth was to provide an introductory section for the flood event and to show the reason for the flood which served as punishment to the people from a loving God. It happened at a period of population growth in the world, when human beings increased. At that time, the people on earth were possibly not so many compared to the present population of the world. It was easy to notice any increase or change in population in a particular area or region of the world. Till date, the world population has continued to increase but it is more difficult now to observe from the crowd when things are not right. Thus, the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים observed and could see that the daughters of that time were beautiful. It is possible they observed a change in the stature of the women and the way they looked compared to those before them. Mere looking at the women was enough temptation for these men. Although marriage was instituted biblically and respected, the problem was the way they disrespectfully took their wives.

Calvin (1847:237-238) claims that the ten patriarchs now indulged in corruption. There was scarcely anything that was not corrupt about the family of Cain; it became obviously dishonourable for the respected family of Seth to engage carnally with the family of Cain. It seems they were condemned for choosing the beautiful wives for themselves. Marriage is a holy institution that is set apart for companionship, procreation and multiplication just as the

saints are set apart for spiritual procreation into the kingdom of God. Anyone who is venturing into marriage must be ready, careful, respectful and mature. Illicit lust is not part of the criteria for choosing a life partner in any culture. The expression of the marriage seems to imply that the flood as punishment marks the end of an era and the beginning of a new life for the people especially as they settle in their new home land (Driver 1904:83, 85).

Verse 1 also indicates that the generation of Noah was beginning to experience some changes in population density. The pagan coloration of the passage was too pronounced to permit its being disconnected from the two nations (Greek and Latin) which were prevalent in antiquity. In their literature, they believed the earlier inhabitants of the earth were **גִּבּוֹרִים** and that the marriage of the gods with mortals was possible in the heroic age (Skinner 1910:140). Similarly, Stigers (1976:97) explains that the root of the disaster is traceable to the preceding era, the era of population expansion. At that time of social change, other influences mounted pressure on the people to cause them to desert “the former lover”, a principle which prevailed in the affairs of men. They looked and beheld fair women, and freely took them as wives from the unbelievers. Brueggemann again notes that only the structure of the passage could help us to engage this difficult text, and that vs.1 and 2 are about the interaction between the word of God and human creation. While vs.4 seems to continue drawing a concluded picture, vs.3 represents a break in that sequence and ascribes sovereignty to Yahweh. The relationship shows a confrontation between the religious world in Israel and Yahweh’s uncompromising state in the world (Brueggemann 1982:71).

The characters in the story were heroes of old who were also men of great name and honour that everyone desired and were proud to associate and relate with. Westermann (1984:365-366) explains that the narrative reached its goal in Vs.4 where it gave the origin of the **גִּבּוֹרִים** and then began to describe the problem of the relationship between the **בְּנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים** and the daughters of men, and their multiple offspring. The subject and the story are about humanity in the primeval times; the climax is reached as a new development of the procreation between the two groups involved in the uncalculated marriage. The main verbs are “they saw” and “they took” which are similar to the way Jacob appreciated the beauty of Rachel and was determined to take her as wife regardless of the cost involved. In the case of Jacob, he went respectfully and in an honourable manner to seek for Rachel’s hand in marriage but the

respected בני־הַאֱלֹהִים randomly and hastily took wives for themselves, which resembled rape because they picked anyone they could lay hands on.

In those days, the אַנְגֵּלִים were on earth, that is, in the beginning but also afterward, at the time of the mythical texts. This also indicates a repetition between vs.1-2 and vs.4, for the presence of these characters was shown at different points in time. Wenham (1987:138) adds that marriage between “men and gods” was a well-known feature of the Egyptian, Greek, Hurrian, Mesopotamian and Ugaritic theology. For example, it was understood that the heroic figure of Gilgamesh descended from such a union, and as such, he was endowed with divine energy. Furthermore, the union of the gods or their marriage was characterized by chaos and succession from the younger gods. At that time, the Lord observed the wickedness of mankind and made a pronouncement, forbidding his spirit to remain with humans for as long as it used to be then, which was in the range of Methuselah’s age of 969 years. He therefore reduced and limited human life to a hundred and twenty years, which only few people attain today. A new sense of life was introduced and humanity possibly lost interest in living and in the things of this world. Sarna (1989:45) further explains that:

At the beginning of history, humans strove to rise to the level of divine beings, and God intervened... Here divine beings lower themselves to the level of humans, and God intervenes... The account... is surely the strangest of all the Genesis narratives... Legends about intercourse between gods and mortal women and between goddesses and men, resulting in the generation of demi-gods, are widespread and familiar ingredients of pagan mythology.

The dignity of the heavenly beings is reduced to shared shame as a result of their lustful desires and covetousness. Again, the question is, “Is it true that the heavenly beings experienced this kind of emotions and desires like humans?” The answer is possibly “Yes”, but divinely “No” because it is only a myth. If the בני־הַאֱלֹהִים are truly “heroes” as “angels” and not human sons of Seth and human daughters of Cain, why did they suffer God’s judgment?

Hamilton (1990:263) explains that the contextual argument against this identification is that it has mankind as the recipients of the punishment for the sins of angels. Why should God judge the innocent? Why is the judgment not directed at the culprits or the guilty who sinned and why should they go un-judged, if they were the ones in this drama? In no way should the innocent suffer for the sins of the guilty, which would be gross injustice. In this

interpretation, we have a myth that shows a picture of Genesis 6:1-4 as a mythological text which should be treated separately. The flood was a punishment for the shameful behaviour of the whole community, and not just for the בני־הַאֱלֹהִים or the “heroes”.

Thus, this brief pericope is said to have its origin in the traditional mythology of the ancient Near East but it has been adopted by the Israelite authors to explain the origin of the Nephilim and the reason for shortening and limiting human lifespan (Arnold 2003:90). Discipline, judgment or punishment instil control in society and anywhere the rod of discipline is neglected, mothers face shame and much disgrace for their children’s bad behaviour. It is a way of relating the ancient society and their myths. The figures were heroes of old who were also “men of great name”, respect and honour whom everyone desired to associate or relate with.

b. Theological Significance of Genesis 6:1-4:

The picture of the בני־הַאֱלֹהִים was that of honour due to their nature of holiness, righteousness and purity. They had a name to protect but shamefully failed to live up to it just as Adam failed to live up to God’s expectation in the Garden of Eden in Genesis 3:6-8. This is possibly the reason why the society including the Church today is filled with wickedness and shame because of human compromise and corruption. The בני־הַאֱלֹהִים violated the order established by Yahweh by choosing for themselves wives from among human beings, knowing who they are. Calvin (1847:238) observes that it is not a light crime to violate a distinction established by the Lord. As God’s worshipers who were separated from the profane nations, they ought to have reverently observed God’s laws to uphold the Church of God here on earth. It is assumed that the behaviour of the בני־הַאֱלֹהִים is pointed as the most extreme disorder. A peculiar and sanctified treasure of God who soiled its hands in immorality is the greatest picture of shame.

In a wedlock, there are certain positive traits that each partner must exhibit before they both come together to begin a family, one of which is temperance or self-control. The בני־הַאֱלֹהִים could not exercise such virtues; rather, they lost control of their emotions and gave in to their passion¹⁰⁰ for the opposite sex. Driver (1904:84) states that it is wise to acknowledge the

¹⁰⁰ If the sons of God had desires for women or sexual relationships that resulted in pregnancy and therefore in giant offspring, it means those involved in such relationships were not angels or divine heavenly beings but humans. They were also referred to as children of God or the sons of God because of their faith in Christ.

simple truth that both textually and exegetically, the meaning of vs.3 is uncertain. He further states that in vs.4, the etymological and true meaning of the word נְפִלִים was known as “the ancient men of prowess” or “renown” in Hebrew folklore. It is obvious that the behaviour of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים introduced an element of disorder in creation, which had to be checked by the special intervention of Yahweh (Skinner 1910:140). The purpose of God at the beginning of creation was to instil order and make the earth a habitable place for humanity.

According to Stigers, there is here a picture of the collapse of two groups of men whose identity as the “sons of *elohim*” has been a distinct problem in that they are interpreted not as humans but as angels on the basis of references such as Job 1:6 and 38:7. The rendering of the mighty men as angels by some exegetes and commentators looks confusing because angels do not marry nor are they given out in marriage. Their physical bodies remain unchangeable (Stigers 1976:97). Morris (1976:163-164) adds that the sin/disease that began when Eve was tempted to doubt God’s word which later showed its unpleasant trait in Cain’s life and came to maturity in the godless civilization finally descended to such terrible morass of wickedness and corruption. Only a holy birth from the heavenly windows could change or purge the earth. In the New Testament in Matthew 24:37-39, the historicity of the great flood was not just refined but people were encouraged to study closely the characteristics of the last days before the flood, for they would be similar to the days before the return of the Messiah.

In Brueggemann’s (1982:72-73) view, we may not understand the narrative fully but it seems to assert that in heaven and on earth, in good order and in disorder, God remains the only giver of life to all creatures, and that creation depends on God gifts and provision to exist. In addition, human existence is informed and guided by Yahweh who is in heaven, and who provides for human needs to enable the multiplication in the society. Hamilton (1990:262) says humankind is still fulfilling God’s mandate to “multiply and fill the earth”. The command to be fruitful and multiply should not be misconceived for immorality and shameful behaviour. Sex is ordained by God for companionship, mutual edification and procreation of humanity (between couples of different genders in this case), but the marriage between the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and the daughters of men implied disrespect, moral decadence and shame to the people of that society.

According to Fretheim (1994:382-383), the narrative in Genesis 6:1 follows what precedes it, that is, the divine blessing in Genesis 1:28 which says, “Be fruitful and multiply”. The command was a language of birth and a reference to the continual act of creation which also included the nonhuman creation or development. The expressions, “they see” and “they take” are parallels that show that the action described is inappropriate. The act of “seeing” narrows the appreciation of women to their beauty or their physical desires, while the “taking” of multiple wives seems arbitrary (forcing and misusing the women). In vs.3, he claims that God issued a decree that such a union would not produce human beings who would live forever. In addition, Louth claims that through the justice of God, the whole humanity was sold to the devil due to the sin of the first man (אָדָם) and both sexes are born sinners, the debt of the first parents being binding on all their posterity (Louth 2001:124). God’s love is lavished on humans to rescue them from their condition and to protect their integrity as a sign or indication of honour.

5.8 Identity of the Celestial Beings (אֲנֹכִיִּים)

The אֲנֹכִיִּים and אֲנֹכִיִּים have been interpreted from various perspectives whether religious, social or scholarly. Sarna (1989:45) claims that in the beginning, humans wanted to be divine but God did not allow it, and in Genesis 6:1-4, the divine beings compromised and conformed to human standards. The fable was about intercourse between the gods and mortal women or between the goddesses and mere men. Both Isaiah 14:12 and Job 4:18-19 express the corruption of the angels in antiquity, the shining stars who fell from heaven to the earth, and forfeited their angelic dignity for shame.

The root word אָפַל emanated from Semitic languages and it was used in a similar way in the Old Testament, and it means “falling down” unintentionally whether of human or of objects. It was distinctly used first for “casting lots” as in Joshua 13:6, 23:4, I Chronicles 26:13-14, Nehemiah 10:34-35, Psalm 78:55, Isaiah 34:17 and Ezekiel 24:6. The second usage is found when the word of God is (not) “allowed to fall” as in Joshua 21:45, 23:14, I Samuel 3:19, and II Kings 8:56, 10:10. More importantly, a person could “fall as an act of self-humiliation”, respect and honour before a master or a superior person (Ruth 2:10; I Sam. 9:6; I Kings 18:17, 39). In this sense, it was also used for prostration or the expression of humble submission before the Lord in worship (Gen. 17:3, 17; I Chron. 21:16; II Chron. 20:18). In Nigeria, prostration is used as an art of respect to honour elders in many cultures especially

among the Yoruba of western Nigeria. The נָפַל may also be related to the military surrender to attackers and violent men in Genesis 6:4, Joshua 11:7 or Job 1:15, as an option to the situation before them which is better than death (Harman 1997:129-130). The daughters of men surrendered when they were attacked by the בְּנֵי־הָאָדָמָה and they took anyone of them as wife.

In a neutral way, it was used to refer to the falling down of objects or person; for instance, a fruit (Nah. 3:12), an axe head (II Kings 6:5) or Rebecca (Gen. 24:64). People could also cause others to fall. In liturgical terms, it was used to plea for favour before Yahweh (Jeremiah 38:26; 42:9; Daniel 9:18-20) and in Ezekiel 8:1, 11:5, the word was used when the *ruah* of Yahweh fell on the prophet. The MT frequently interprets נָפַל as “to fall”. In Proverb 11:5, the wicked fall on account of their wickedness, but the perverse tongue, the crooked, and those who trust in their riches also fall for lack of guidance into shame and disgrace. The נָפְלִים in Genesis 6:4 and Numbers 13:33 characterised the ancient גִּבְרִים as exalted heroes and men of great name who fell into shame (Seebass 1998:489-492). People who fell in most instances needed help to regain their honour.

The *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* renders the term נָפְלִים literally as fallen ones based on Genesis 6:1-4 and Numbers 13:31-33 where the נָפְלִים were on earth in those days of antiquity. They were mythical semi-divine beings who were also the product of the immoral and illicit relationship between the בְּנֵי־הָאָדָמָה and human beings (Westermann 1974:494-497). The נָפְלִים were the prodigies of the human-divine union, and in Genesis 6:4b, they were the “heroes of old” or “the warriors of renown”. They were gigantic according to Numbers 13:33, an ancient race of great stature but not “demi-gods” or “human-divine creatures”. Ezekiel 32:27 indicates that they were the warrior nation that “fell” into Sheol. They were the “heroes of antiquity” (Gunkel 1910:58-59). The LXX uses the term, גִּבְרִים, the Vg., *gigantes*, the Aramaic cognates, גִּבְרִים in the Dead Sea Scroll (DSS) and in Job 38:31 of the Targum, Orion is the image of a gigantic hunter. In Enoch, they are גִּבְרִים (4QENGi 3:8) and also mighty ones (Coxon 2000:618-619).

Trafton (2009:253) states that the word נָפַל implies the fallen ones. They were on earth in those days of antiquity and were still there when the בְּנֵי־הָאָדָמָה went to the daughters of men and even afterwards. They were the heroes of old (גִּבְרִים), warriors of great renown who lived

before the flood in Genesis 6:1-4. Numbers 13:33 refers to the sons of Anak and in Deuteronomy 2:10-11. The Anakim were noted for their size, height and were referred to as the Rephaim not נַפְלִיִּים. In I Enoch 1-16, the watchers “בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים” produced the גְּבֻרִים who wreak havoc on earth before they were destroyed by the flood. It does not seem that the reference to the נַפְלִיִּים is to angels”. Coxon (2009:619) asks questions about the ambivalent nature of the נַפְלִיִּים or בְּנֵי־הַאֱלֹהִים especially with respect to their parents in Genesis 6:

Were these superhuman creatures, demi-gods, like the Gilgamesh who was said to two-thirds god and one-third human, or can they be regarded as completely human, stemming from the aristocratic line of Seth? Or are they rulers in the manner of Keret, king of Ugarit, or David, king of Israel...? Most modern exegetes recognise the validity of the first interpretation which is supported by a consistent picture of God’s heavenly court and council in the Hebrew Bible (Pss 29:1, 82:6; 89:6; Job 1-2; 1 Kgs 22:19-22; Isa 6:1-8).

5.9 Preliminary Conclusion

Honour and shame go along with good or bad names. A name is a symbol of identity, and most cultures believe that the meaning of the name is a prayerful wish bestowed on the child from those who gave the name. In most cases, it is expected that individuals would strive to protect the names they have been given for their own sake and for the sake of the family (or community). Failure to keep the respect, honour and integrity of one’s name brings shame and disrepute. The “heroes”, “judges”, גְּבֻרִים and “warriors” are all names for “men of renown”, “men with a name” or people who have integrity or a name to protect. Unfortunately, these men shamefully failed to live up to the expectation of their audience.

Various people were associated with good and positive_names in the Bible especially in the Old Testament – these include Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua or Sarah, Rebecca, Rachael, Naomi, Ruth and many others. Some of them changed their names because of the evil and shameful associations with the names or certain dishonourable occurrences associated with the names they bear; for instance, Jacob or Jabez. Kafang notes that names in ancient Israel were an important and special record that identified a personal as in Genesis, Chronicles, Ezra or Nehemiah, and even in the New Testament, Matthew and Luke recorded the generations of people. Some names were changed due to certain circumstances such as Abram to Abraham, Sarai to Sarah, Joseph to Zaphanath-Paneah (Gen. 17:5-15). Furthermore, it is believed that a new name indicates a new beginning in life,

opportunity, character, or position of honour and respect (Kafang 2002:116-117). As such, everyone desires a good name in the society as a mark of respect.

The בני־הַאֲלֹהִים ought to have protected their names by showing respect, honour and self-control to the opposite sex, and if they truly needed wives, they should have organized themselves better as “men of name”. There are some societies where names of people who have been dishonoured are recorded so that the public would be wary of them. Such people include robbers, rapists, debtors/extortionists, murderers, etc. A community¹⁰¹ with corrupt names and unscrupulous young people is also shamed; in such places, parents are not proud to hold a *tête-à-tête* with their children. Their chief is neither vocal before other kings nor before pilgrims; nor is the community a comfortable place for visitors. The practice of honour and shame equally serves as the weapon of discipline in our society, which is also significant here for human dignity. Every one fears his/her observers because the audience determines what is wrong or right, as such, there is much secrecy among the people.

The expression בני־הַאֲלֹהִים has been given a Christian and theological meaning as “sons of Seth”, while the daughters of men are “daughters of Cain”. However, the New Testament refers to it as “children of God” in John 1:12 and Romans 8:14, that is, those who place their faith in Jesus as saviour and who are “born again”. The sons of Seth were probably good people who were respected in society, which was why they could be referred to as בני־הַאֲלֹהִים. However, some commentators follow the Septuagint to translate the בני־הַאֲלֹהִים as “angels”, which accounts for the explanation that the בני־הַאֲלֹהִים were divine beings who had sexual relations with earthly women. The behaviour of the בני־הַאֲלֹהִים in this text was plainly wrong, but what is right or wrong can be determined in various ways as “moral is more”, “the majority is right”, “the good are right”, and “the strong are right”. However, even though ethical principles are important, they are not central here. The key word has suggested that the נְפִלִים are not “angels” and neither are they “judges”. The likely and closest link to the “great people of renown” or “honourable men of name” are “the Sethites” who were among the living in the then ancient world.

¹⁰¹ The בני־הַאֲלֹהִים were “creatures with great names”, celebrities and spiritual beings who were identified by their names. In this narrative, is found a picture of a perverse group of people, who were doomed for destruction at the time of the beginning of confusion, war, violence and disorder in the society, the same issues which the UN has found difficult to handle till date.

A critical look at Genesis 6:1-4, and 6:5-8 indicates the display of God's anger due to the shameful and disrespectful deeds of the creatures that were on earth at that time, whether semi-gods or human beings. The men of great name who could not protect their names and integrity or maintain respect before others provoked God, according to the myth. It is important that one should be careful to live upright and respectfully and to walk tall as the Sethites knowing that a little mistake could affect thousands of others who sees one as a model. This was probably the message for the postexilic time. There is power behind a name, which is why everyone likes his name to be mentioned in the books of record. It is also honourable to be mentioned among people with great names who make a difference in the world. Such people are always careful not to put themselves to shame before other people.

CHAPTER SIX

HONOUR AND SHAME AS RESPECT

6.1 Summary and Conclusion

The function of the culture of honour and shame in the community is to foster an appreciation of respect in the form of human dignity. Again the question in this thesis is, “How do the stories of the beginning impact on the theological understanding of human dignity?” Three hypotheses were drawn out for this study. Firstly, an analysis of honour and shame will clarify how the stories of the beginning impact on the theological appreciation of human dignity. Secondly, the relegated stories of the beginning will be assessed to expose the roles of the characters in the text in defining and promoting the value of humankind from the unfamiliar southern Kaduna cultures. Honour and shame in unfamiliar or neglected cultures such as those of the Atyap and their neighbours are first illustrated by stories that help to inform and shape our own frame of reference. Thirdly, Genesis 6:1-4 is an important (though neglected) pericope that illustrates the significance of honour and shame for the understanding of human dignity. In addition, certain terminologies and phrases are defined which include honour, shame or human dignity, stories of beginning and their relationship to the southern Kaduna stories. The phrase “according to” is also clarified to aid the readers understand how the study relates to human dignity.

In the second chapter, the semantic fields of honour and shame and their synonyms are examined. In the case of honour, the synonyms are respect, value, worth, esteem, treasure, regard, reverence, jewels and appreciation. On the other hand, those of shame are disrespect, disdain, disgrace, degradation, humiliation, scorn, condemnation, discredit and contempt. These related terms, to honour or to shame that can be used to define respect. The purpose of the methodology is to show the relationship between the concepts from a general point of view, ancient Near Eastern and Old Testament perspective. It is therefore concluded that the semantics fields of honour and shame are not static but relative and function as a web of concepts depending on the context. Interestingly, from a socio-religious perspective, honour could be negative if it has to do with taking human life while shame is positive if it is an exercise of restraint, respect or humility in the form of shyness. It means what is honourable in the Middle East Asia for example may be considered shameful in Africa and America, and

what is shameful in Pakistan or India may be an art of socialization in South Africa or certain parts of Nigeria. Again, it depends on the socio-religious perspective of the people. The theological development of honour and shame in Jewish history from priestly, Deuteronomistic, wisdom and prophetic literatures and its biblical relevance are also investigated.

Thirdly, the culture of honour and shame clarify the practice of human dignity in southern Kaduna especially in relation to the stories of the beginning of the Atyap and their neighbours. The argument is that the existing stories shaped _ identity and the importance they attach to self-respect. It was through these stories that they developed their code of conduct known as “honour and shame”, which consciously or unconsciously, is used to regulate the attitude of respect in the entire society. They have taboos for men, women and young people who served as guidelines for good conduct and reverence among the people. Their stories were not only meant for entertainment, they also functioned in the acquisition of wisdom, impartation of historical facts, preservation of the cultural heritage and socio-religious and general education. Although not many stories are available in the form of myths of creation, but it is assumed that without stories, there would have been no organized community life or the idea of seeking honour. In this regard, it has been noted that it is due to the importance placed on the culture of honour and shame that several practices are observed that uphold human dignity.

Fourthly, it has been determined here also that the people’s perception of the stories of creation, the creator and the origin of the universe in southern Kaduna facilitated their conception of the Old Testament narratives especially of Genesis 1-11. Thus, the importance of respect for one another was also recognized from their narratives and stories. The culture of respect was not regarded as a modern invention but rather it was practiced in the ancient Near Eastern as well as the Old Testament. Similarly, the twelve tribes of Israel lived in communities which practiced honour and shame. Likewise the Mesopotamians, Egyptians, Sumerians, Assyrians, Babylonians and other late ancient cultures respected their kings and to an extent worshipped them like gods. In fact, they regarded kings as representatives of God/gods on earth, who had special features of the *imago Dei* more than other human beings. They were regarded as co-rulers on earth with God. They had palaces where they related to God and judged cases, administered services and controlled the social and religious life of

their subjects. They were organized such that everyone in the community including their families, clans or tribes could show respect to them. Nevertheless, in the case of the people of God, not all the kings of Israel and Judah followed the honourable ways of their ancestor David.

It seems that in the ancient Near Eastern context, every human interaction was viewed as an occasion for honour or shame, and gaining value in the public eye. In these cultures, anyone who did not give due honour or respect to a superior was regarded as a shameless being¹⁰². In the Mediterranean area, the culture of honour and shame has been crucial to local, social, sexual, commercial and religious life. Ijatuyi-Morphe (2011:160) explains that:

Honour and shame in ancient Israel was a value system that operated at the level of a given traditional community where it is use for social and religious ordering of people's behaviours. They practice shame as negative control while honour as positive control measure use to judge the inherent social forces at work in the community, which is use to achieve life completeness and assessment among humanity.

The Atyap culture and those of four other groups in southern Kaduna are used to shed light on these stories in relation to human dignity.

In the fifth chapter, an exposition of Genesis 6:1-4 is conducted as a method of interpreting the honour and shame concepts in the text. It begins with a background¹⁰³ of the pericope where the תולדות is discussed before demarcating the text in question and justifying the reasons for the demarcation in terms of honour and shame study. Text critical information is

¹⁰² The reference to man and woman as naked yet not ashamed in Genesis 2:25 was probably not to the time they sinned in the garden and their nakedness was made visible, because they not only lost respect then, they also gained public guilt and a spiritual shame that could not be humanly understood (Church 1991:1255). Yahweh said those who honour me (*kabod*) I will honour and those who despise me I will despise (*bosh*), thus showing a reciprocal sense of honour and shame. He is aware of the hierarchy of honour and its structure when he said, "if I am a father where is the honour due me?" (Hagedorn 2005:500). These stories have been used as a channel or means of identity recognition, and developing history and traditional beliefs that led to the code of honour and shame.

¹⁰³ It is maintained that Genesis 6:1-4 can be studied as a separate pericope in order to depict the culture of honour and shame in the stories of the beginning. In this particular myth of creation, certain terminologies characterised honour and shame such as the respected בני־האלהים (sons of God) who forcefully inter-married the daughters of humankind as an indication that they could not exercise self-control and restraint. On the other hand, they gave birth to "giants", who became "the heroes" and "great men of renown" with the "good name". Ultimately, it is observed that just as Adam sinned in Genesis 2-3 and he was punished, the wickedness of humankind was also punished in Genesis 6:1-4 and 6:8-9:28, for God hated evil or any shameful act among his people. Adam and Eve were expelled out of the garden; the man became responsible for his food and livelihood while the woman was punished with labour when giving birth. In Genesis 6:3, God took away his spirit and shortened the lifespan of human beings to 120 years and in Genesis 6:5-8, human wickedness was punished through the flood.

also significant to the analysis, and a personal translation is provided before a verse-by-verse discussion of Genesis 6:1-4. To accomplish the task, the literary and historical aspects as well as the theological significance of the text and the identity of the נְפִלִים are examined. Thus, the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, the גְּבֻרִים and other features are regarded as elements of honour or shame in the text.

Various myths existed as creation stories depending on the culture. The gods or divine beings were the characters that portrayed honour and shame in the narratives including “the warriors of old” who were also known as “men of renown” or “men of name” whose names were greatly honoured. The name itself was a mark of identity and respect. It was also a symbol or sign of power especially when identified as honourable; then, it came with dignity. On the other hand, Genesis 6:1-4 depicts the “men of renowned” נְפִלִים and בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים with shame, disrespect and disgrace due to their behaviour towards the women in the society. The culture of honour and shame did not just drop from the sky, neither was it an isolated idea, it developed from the people’s stories. On a similar note, most ancient Near Eastern stories developed into oral laws which later shaped the people’s history and identity.

The marriage of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים and the human daughters was a serious violation of the community code of conduct and a sign of disrespect to their observers. Marriage, being a respected institution, one needed self-control and planning before venturing into it. Marriage was for the purpose of companionship, procreation, sexual satisfaction and for avoiding promiscuity or immorality in the community thereby conducting oneself in an honourable way in the eyes of others. It was wrong, disrespectful and shameful for the “men of name” to engage in their abominable acts without any consideration for their victims. Rather they randomly selected women for their immoral conduct without respecting the custom or the women involved. Thus, the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים sinned in the sight of Yahweh. In some of the stories, the gods gave birth to semi-divine gods and human beings while in others; the products of the marriage were fellow gods after their own kind.

Lastly, on the identity of the בְּנֵי־הָאֱלֹהִים, the argument remains between the several views that they were “angels”, “judges”, “divine beings”, “the redeemed ones” or “the Sethites”. The diversity of views is possibly due to the bias of scholars in interpreting the passage to meet certain needs at a point in time or for certain research projects. However, this research

concur with the interpretation of the **בְּנֵי־הַקְּטָלִים** as “the Sethites”, not only because they are depicted as respected people/beings, but for the reason that they are the creatures that best fit the description in the text. The Sethites are the only category that could have done this and not angels or any other divine or semi-divine beings and deities. It is worthy of note that what distinguishes this research is its investigation of the stories of origin and creation from the perspective of honour and shame.

6.2 Relevance of Honour and Shame for Old Testament Scholarship

(I) It is important to revisit our first hypothesis at this point. **Respect** can be considered as the key word in the semantic field of honour and shame in this thesis, and it is also the word that best describes human dignity in the context of southern Kaduna cultures. If one were to summarize the arguments in one word, it would be *respect*. It is a kind of honour that is assumed based on a careful relationship with the people around. Respect is important because honour is easily visible through the lenses of the respect one shows to others in the community, which is the thrust of human dignity. On the other hand, shame is regarded as contrary to dignity or respect. Therefore, without respect, it is difficult to perceive or discern the dignity of human beings.

There is always a hierarchy of respect which flows from the younger to the older and in most cultures, the younger person regards and values the elders. On that basis, the elders in turn see the young person(s) as respectful, full of values, worthy of honour and responsible in discharging their duties. At times, they say, “investing in such young people will not be a waste”. Respect is not only observed in southern Kaduna but also experimental in most societies in the world depending on their perception of what leads to honour or to shame. For this reason, it is right to say honour and shame indicates respect in the form of human dignity. In this research, similar issues have been discussed to clarify the idea of honour as dignity and shame as indignity and the ways they serve as indicators of human dignity.

Fontaine in a recent article describes respect as an attitude of reverence and compliance owed to superior (parents, husbands, wives, slave owners and to an extent young people) or to priests, scribes, teachers, bishops and other leaders. It is put in place to dignify the superior persons in the society (Lam. 5:12; Eph. 5:33; Tob.14:13; Bar. 4:15). On this basis, human beings are to honour and respect God by keeping the commands and dictates of Yahweh. The

scribes and Pharisees in the New Testament demanded respect from the society because of their own sense of self-importance (Mark 12:38-39; Luke 11:43, 20:46; see Fontaine 2009:767). Respect and honour are related to God's creation in the sense that God made human beings as superiors to every living creature. In Psalm 8:2, 4, human beings were similarly favoured and given higher responsibilities to have dominion over all the other creatures for the sustainability of the earth.

It is significant to state how respect functioned in the stories of beginning and in the cultures of honour and shame. The ancient Near East provides a socio-cultural setting where respect superseded every activity of the day, though the hierarchy of respect is down from the subjects or followers up to the leaders and kings in the community. As such, all respect was geared towards pleasing either the king or the leaders, whose image superseded the dignity of all other people! The image of the king and his family was regarded as higher than that of subjects and comparable to that of the gods in ancient Mesopotamia. In Egypt, dignity was largely an elitist and royal feature, but subjects were regarded as servants or slaves whose dignity did not really count in the society. It looks as though the kings were no respecter of human beings. Unfortunately, their subjects regarded their actions sometimes as a favour from the gods rather than dehumanization or disrespect to their humanity.

Thus, dignity was attributed first to the gods/kings and then to fellow humans starting with the men, then the women and youth/children, but some cultures regarded boys before the women/girls. Respect to the gods was not optional; everyone who desired happiness obeyed and respected the gods. Incidentally, the ancient Near Eastern characteristics of respect are clearly found in Genesis 1-11. Not only does Genesis share a common primeval history with its neighbours, it also concurs with contemporary cultures at various points. Both the ancient Near Eastern texts and Genesis agree on the existence of God/gods who controlled human affairs and claim that to some degree, humans have the divine image of God in them. In *Atra-Hasis*, humankind is depicted as a mixture of clay, flesh and blood of a dead god and this finds a parallel in Genesis 2:7, where God created humans out of the dust of the ground and breathed divine life into them. An Egyptian text also says human beings are made in the image of God as in Genesis 1:26-27 (Wenham 1987: viii-xi). Clearly, the nature of the context contributes to such similarities.

(II) At this point, it will be helpful to prove the second hypothesis of this research. The thinking here is that Old Testament scholarship could consider engaging seriously in the future with cultures that are not really noticed or known such as those of southern Kaduna. Thus, this kind of study could contribute to Old Testament scholarship, for southern Kaduna as a cultural environment opens one's mind to certain significant issues facing human beings. It may also interest others in this setting to deliberate on similar socio-cultural issues in the future. This research is not really an exegetical study but rather a comparison of existing research on honour and shame and the cultural practices of southern Kaduna people, and the role it plays in the appreciation of human dignity.

Context here plays an important role in the definition of honour and shame. To be precise, in southern Kaduna, dignity also has to do with one's tribal affiliation. The same thing applies to the notion of human dignity which is influenced by culture in northern Nigeria, where dignity depends on one's religion. One who is a Muslim is regarded as a complete human being by the Hausa, because it is *haram* (unlawful) to abide by any constitution or teaching other than the Quran. Similarly, the Christians also consider dignity from a religious perspective and affiliation. However, to maintain human dignity, Christians and Muslims must reconsider their stance on respect to fellow human beings through dialogue in order to overcome their attitude of superiority or inferiority towards others. Christ taught his followers to love all and to try and live in peace regardless of religion.

Naturally, human beings desire dignity; as such, the notion of honour and shame is important to them, even as they seek approval and respect from others. Since so much significance is attached to honour, scholars must give attention to a meaningful and relevant interpretation of Scriptures to people in their various cultures, contexts or localities. These are ideas on holiness which were observed as honour in all parts of the daily life of the Jews as symbolized by their Torah, the priest/garments, the Temple, the Sabbath day, the offerings, the ceremonial cleansing rites, the daily rituals, the social life and the national law. Likewise, churches as communities of people must develop strong attitudes as an agent of change in their contexts to promote respect and sacredness, and to foster human dignity.

In ancient Near Eastern myths, the battle of the gods was to create order (which could be seen as respect), promote kingship hierarchy and procreate. This involved the imagery of the

divine assembly of the gods who are pictured as heroes or warriors who served as assistants to the great deities. In every society, there was a deity who stood out as the great super deity of renown among the people; the Jews had Yahweh and other nations had Ba'al, El, Amon-Re, Marduk, while southern Kaduna cultures had Agwaza, Kazah, Nom, Kasiloh, etc. They were the divine warriors of the people who fought on their behalf. In some cases, they fought one another in constant conflict in the skies, in the clouds, on earth, in the seas, around the sun, moon and stars; they fought with monsters to create or to protect. In some places, they interacted with female humans and gave birth to גַּבְרִים, semi-divine beings or other fellow gods in their likeness. All this was to guarantee peace and order in order to attain a form of honour in the society.

Kings and gods were also the main characters in most of the stories. They were regarded as providers of shelter and livelihood for anyone who could not cater for his family. However, it was an act of dishonour when kings seized beautiful women from their husband/subjects especially from slaves, and when they turned their poor family members into palace parasites. Many slaves became wealthy through this means and many women were ready to offer themselves to the king as wife. Slaves engaged in hard labour, some had yokes on their necks, their ears and mouths were pierced for identification, and it was a lesser evil than the option of death since slaves were often treated like animals. In fact, some free but poor subjects offered themselves as “bond slaves” in order to become rich, because it was honourable to be a rich slave than a poor free person. As such, hard labour was better than poverty. Snatching the wives of their subjects was considered a favour to their families. The children born to the king and those born to the slave husband became brothers and sisters, and a new lineage with the king began. Some slave husbands who co-operated with the authority were freed and dignified by being given an office to serve in the king’s palace.

(III) The evidence for our third hypothesis needs to be clarified here. As regards honour and shame as well as human dignity, the expression “add on” in Genesis 6 shows that the נְפִלִים and בְּנֵי-הַקְּזָאִלָּהִים were respected, but they also should have reciprocated respect to the women. In the same vein, the poor and lowly in the society should also be respected because they also carry the same *imago Dei* in them regardless of their socio-cultural or religious status in the society. Disrespect shown to the women of Genesis by marrying them against their will was uncalled for; they were humiliated and raped, used as sexual tools for the satisfaction and

pleasure of the בני־הָאֱלֹהִים. If this short story is viewed from post-exilic perspective, then it must have been narrated to caution God's people as they settled in their new land. Michael states that influential status like wealth, age (elderly), royalty, and people with magical abilities and to an extent polygamous unions are considered superhuman in most African societies. In the West, respect and value goes with education, age (youth), wealth, heroism or being a celebrity. The illiterate, fat/overweight and vertically challenged could be of low worth or dignity (Michael 2011:181). In fact, sometimes people are stigmatized because of their personality, and for this reason, human beings make effort to seek honour and respect before others, which is also a form of security.

Similarly, the Old Testament provided a theological context to breed the culture of respect among people. In Genesis 1-3, God created humankind as his crown of honour and gave them the responsibility to take care of the other creatures and provide a breeding ground for a better and sustainable environment. In Deuteronomy 6, the Israelites were instructed to impart knowledge to their children at all times, teaching them respect and obedience to the law as well as the culture, history and religion of their ancestors. In Psalms 8, humankind was elevated above other creatures as an indication of divine respect while the teaching method in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes was respect, listening, keeping to instructions of the parents. In the prophets, the rich were cautioned to also respect or consider the weak in the society as a way of showing respect to God. Likewise, Genesis 6:1-4 silently speaks of respect and human dignity (or their absence). The beautiful and fair women were dehumanized without respect for their feelings.

Thus, if the myth of Genesis 6:1-4 is a post-exilic invention, then it is significant for the culture of honour and shame as well as for human dignity. It indicates that myths are not just mere stories and legends for entertainment, but they could also be useful for theological research. The narrator revisited the ancient times by introducing this short story to point out that respect and dignity should not only be rendered to kings and the elites but also to all human beings including the poor, widows, orphans, homeless, destitute and the weak. The intriguing story was also used during the restoration of the people to their new homeland, to emphasize the importance of dignity to men, women and children in the community.

In order to prove the third hypothesis, it is argued that Genesis 6:1-4 is a bridging mechanism that the narrator adopted to relate how God felt about the irresponsible behaviour of humans on earth in those days. Such devices are mostly used to capture the reader's attention or to develop suspense in the narrative and to an extent draw a picture of the consequences of their wickedness. In a different sense, it could be argued that it was indeed honourable and favourable for the earthly daughters of Cain to enjoy a relationship with these esteemed beings. Instead of seeking divine women or heavenly marriages, they stooped low to relate with these women. Genesis 6:5-8 shows that the flood which covered everywhere was as a result of human wickedness and iniquity which also covered the earth. This is again an indication that certain aspects of Genesis 6:1-4 has been overlooked in contemporary research and that the text demarcation is accurate and precise on this note.

Furthermore, it appears that such kind of stories as in the pericope were popular at that time as Genesis 5:22-32 also recorded how Enoch walked with God and did not see death or decay (unlike Abraham, Moses, the Prophets and Christ's apostles in the New Testament). God came down from heaven to stroll with a mere person like Enoch. We also see Methuselah whose achievements were not visible but who was blessed with a longer life than anyone who ever lived on earth. In the same text, Lamech the great and gigantic hunter had like features with the *gibborim* but failed to respect his relationship with Yahweh and other people. Noah also became the vessel of human salvation from the wicked and evil universe.

Likewise such kinds of stories were in existence that is why Genesis 5:22-32 recorded how Enoch walked with God and did not see death or decay (unlike Abraham, Moses, the Prophets and Christ's apostles in the New Testament). God came down from heaven to stroll with a mere person like Enoch. We also see Methuselah whose achievement were not visible but blessed and honoured with long life on earth than any human that have ever lived. In the same text Lamech the great and gigantic hunter who had like features with the *gibborim* failed to respect his relationship with Yahweh and other humanity. Then Noah came who became the vessel of human salvation on the wicked and evil universe. It is believed that Lamech named his son "Noah" because "he will bring relief" to them just like Christ became the saviour of the sinful mankind (Louth 2001:122).

Westermann notes that Genesis 5:24 falls outside the argument pattern and echoes the fact that Enoch walked with God in vv. 22, 24 and then he was taken up to heaven “for he did not experience death”. The phrase also appeared in reference to Abraham and Noah in Genesis 17: and 6:9 to emphasize a close relationship between God and human beings. God is still in the business of drawing people to himself in a respectable association especially the saints or “*gibborim* in heart” (Westermann 1984:357-358). Enoch distinguished himself from others like Cain and Lamech who lived dishonourable lives. Wenham explains that Lamech, a strong, agile and gigantic young man could not follow in the ways of his ancestor who lived well but strayed into a violent lifestyle and was noted for wickedness like Cain his ancestor (Wenham 1987:112). Thus, Lamech is portrayed as an offspring of Adam and Eve who disrespected God and violated the terms of their relationship in Genesis 1-3.

Hamilton relates that Enoch was the seventh person in Adam’s genealogy and was the most honoured among his ancestors because God took him alive, he did not die. It was not just a question of respect for humanity but a picture of human sacredness. Elijah also did not experience death or decay as other humans (II Kings 2:11). Moreover, in I and II Enoch, the sun worship of the sky god, was probably attributed to him. On the other hand, Lamech the hard man who resembled the *gibborim* or the *nephlim* which existed before the flood and lived in the primeval days (Num. 13:33) named his son Noah, “because he will bring relief from the agony and wickedness of humanity” (Hamilton 1990:257). Arnold added that the exaltation of violence in the world is captured in Lamech because the people of his generation forsook God and they were punished (Arnold 2003:81).

Thus, it is true that just as humankind sinned in Genesis 1-3, so did they also fall into iniquity in Genesis 6, and just as they were punished for their sins in the garden that was the same way God also punished them for their wickedness which was all over the earth by sending the flood in Genesis 6-9. Again Genesis 6:1-4 now comes in as a story to illustrate the illicit behaviour of humankind on earth while 6:5-8 to the end of Genesis 9, state clearly the depraved and wicked condition of humankind on earth. In recent research, Genesis 6:1-4 has been neglected possibly due to its mythical nature but it is clear that this is a relevant passage that illustrates the significance of honour and shame for the propagation of human dignity. The text is important for the appreciation of human and self-worth and it can be made even more relevant in modern times if scholars choose to engage with a neglected text as this.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

In order to answer our research question, respect should be regarded as a social responsibility to be rendered to those with whom one relates. It is also counted on the basis of our behaviour towards those we lead and those who look up to us as models. The entire Church in the New Testament developed their dignity from this background of respect and the fulfilment of their duties to other human beings including the scribes, lawyers, the judges, the prophets, the elders in the community. Merrill explains that the *imago Dei* is tied to the idea that human beings having a responsibility towards God. Spiritually and physically correspondent to the creator and should sustain this resemblance embedded in them from the beginning. This idea compares with the Mesopotamian and Egyptian theology which says that humankind are the representatives of God on earth and, to an extent, god themselves. For this reason, kings were highly regarded as the image of the gods (Merrill 2003:441-442). In Genesis 1-3, humankind was charged with the responsibility of caring for the earth and being accountable to God who placed his *imago Dei* in them.

In the case of honour and shame, the scripture sees them as a code of conduct and a model of purity. Holiness and obedience in that regard are virtues of honour in the Old Testament especially in the Pentateuch (Exod. 20; Lev. 18-19; Deut. 6). De Silva claims that the use of the language of honour and shame in a text leads the readers close to the heart of what the author of the text seeks to effect (De Silva 1996:435). If the church must influence the present generation and revive the dignity of people in its socio-religious life and environment, the check and balances of honour and shame are important but they should be balanced and informed by dignity, which then can penetrate all arms of community life. Olyan argues that the practice of honour and shame is supposed to be recognized and acknowledged by the community; it is a public phenomenon. The loss of honour or its reduction always leads to shame and communicates a loss of social status in view of the society (Olyan 1996:204). The loss of respect before others is of significant concern to most people; therefore, shame is a social stigmatization of cultural, geographical and importantly religious perspective.

Thus, to the nineteenth century researchers, dignity was considered an ‘honour-complex’ while twentieth century anthropologists employed the idea of “identity” as a Circum-Mediterranean value system that penetrated the Jewish, Christian and Muslim cultures and that affects us too. Female honour in this setting was generally branded as shame especially

as it applied to patriarchy and masculine dominance in the society. Honour could be bestowed on a woman based on her husband's integrity and respect in the society. The loss of honour applied only to men while shame was attributed to women, but positive shame was regarded as honour if she maintained her chastity and modesty, conducted herself well with the opposite sex, and expressed shame or respect in her daily relationship with others in order to build her reputation (Hagedorn 2005:497-498).

Modern biblical scholarship sees honour *kaved* as a pivotal value in the ancient Mediterranean world. Honour or shame is earned and it could be lost depending on how one relates to other beings and to God. A woman could also cause her husband's loss of dignity or shame due to her behaviour (I Sam. 15:30; I Chron. 19:3; Job 29:30; Ps. 91:15; Prov. 31:10-30; see also Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 15:4; 19:19; Luke 18:20cf. Downing 2007:884). Honecker (2009:242) states that:

Honour is dignity accorded to all human beings, a recognition of personal or group integrity and expressed qualitatively. In social and religious groups, the honour/shame code plays an important role in the integration and restriction of other members of the society, it could be given to people of different faith, strangers or to close ones depending on the element of respect they exhibits to others.

There is negative honour or positive shame as earlier stated which could be result of fighting or killing on behalf of another order to regain lost glory, as in the case of Dinah and the Schechemite prince in Genesis 34 or of David and Goliath in I Samuel 17. Honour is a form of high-level respect, of being esteemed, revered, or admired by a deity or person in authority. Genesis 45:13, Exodus 20:12, Deuteronomy 5:16 and Malachi 1:6 all refer to the significance of giving honour to parents. Additionally, honour comes from God and it is manifested in human beings who were created in the image of God for maintaining relationship with God (Ps. 84:12, 85:10). Heroism also leads to honour (Judg. 8:22), and so does wisdom (Gen. 41:39; Prov. 3:16). Honour is given to the elderly (Lev. 19:32; Lam. 5:12), while divine favour brings honour (I Sam. 24:7, 11) to children (I Sam. 2:1) and to the wealthy (Prov. 14:24), for one's stature (I Sam. 9:2) and for comeliness (I Sam. 16:18; Ps. 45:3). In the early New Testament times, during the persecution of the Church, many women killed themselves in order to preserve their honour rather than allow rapists and other wicked forces to take advantage of and shame them.

6.4 Significance of the Study for Further Research

Cultures and traditions are widespread, and in all places, one encounters the challenges of culture change or culture shock due to a new perception of things especially of how right and wrong are determined. In this study, the honour and shame code is a socio-religious scale of measuring right and wrong behaviours of people in a community. If culture truly differs from one context to another, then honour and shame can be studied in different places and from the different perspectives of the people, using different. Scholars should rise up to the challenge of observing people's behaviour and the reasons behind their conduct to understand different ways of asserting human dignity. It is clearly understood that the major and popular people groups have been at the heart of current research on human dignity but this study has attempted to show that the minority or unfamiliar cultures also have something to offer research (Ps. 8:2, 4).

This is not to say no one has attempted to discuss such issues in the past. However, the study has tried to elaborate on existing but limited works on the subject matter at hand. For instance, Oduyoye has considered the text of Genesis 6:1-4 in the past from a similar perspective while recently, Ijatuyi-Morphe and Matthew have pointed to the importance of honour and shame in living a respected life. The influence of scholars from southern Kaduna (e.g. Kato, Turaki, Kafang, James, and Kunhyop) is also acknowledged in this study. A few other scholars have also commented notably on the significance of respect for human dignity in southern Kaduna and in Africa at large.

Therefore, the need to respect one another in southern Kaduna is important for the progress and unity of the people especially in an era of political, social and religious segregation¹⁰⁴. A word of caution here is that this work is not a methodology for solving socio-cultural problems nor is it an entirely new approach. It is only an emphasis on the culture of dignity and respect. For the reason that honour and shame depend on the setting and on cultural sensitivity, scholars may need to re-evaluate their emphases and be attentive to the opportunities and potential in certain cultures that have been overlooked so far in the effort to promote human dignity. Importantly, wherever dignity, respect and honour are observed

¹⁰⁴ Respect and dignity are still largely dependent on religion and social affiliation in northern Nigeria. However, what is important for the people's dignity here is respect for our institutions and dignity for the other despite tribal or religious affiliations. Honour and shame should also be centrally observed and not just from various perspectives.

progress would be evident. De Silva (1996:439) asserts that the pursuit of wisdom results in honour or in shame.

The idea of re-creation is another picture one finds in Genesis 6:1-4, and it has prospects for further research especially as it concerns the minority or unfamiliar groups like southern Kaduna cultures. Once more, in Psalm 8:2-4, God dignified and crowned humans humankind to govern the rest not because there were no larger and wilder animals that he could use but because little creatures also have something to offer, then God. This pericope can be used as an example of stories¹⁰⁵ or myths that help people to understand the stories in Genesis and other Old Testament passages.

Other areas of focus regarding the pericope are the diversities in a society and its traditions, creation and procreation, the theology of holiness and purity in the community of God's people. However, the major development in this thesis is the analysis of the pericope from the perspective of honour and shame in the light of similar stories in Africa particularly in southern Kaduna. Therefore, scholars are urged to focus on a theology that is meaningful and that can help people to comprehend human value and God's purpose for creating human beings to live in harmony. In this way, theology will continue to be relevant and real to the human race.

¹⁰⁵ Westermann (1984) has done a great deal of research on this text in relation to myths and ancient stories in his commentary on Genesis 1-11.

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¹⁰⁶ It is important to provide a separate bibliography in order to allow readers who do not have access to academic libraries but can access the internet in order to have better understanding of the work.

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