

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Bible is a library of books comprised of traditions of the people of Israel. This is evident from the creation myths in Genesis chapter one to the post-exilic compilations. Those traditions first existed in oral forms, and transmitted from one generation to another. The Biblical texts as we have them today passed through various forms of preservation before documentation. At one point or another in history of the Jews, those traditions have been interpreted and re-interpreted to suit particular situations within the believing community. The authors, editors and redactors were so inspired that they deployed various literary styles and forms to pass the message to their immediate audience. The ability to dig out the original intentions behind any Biblical text and their proper contextualization has been an age long problem, and keeps growing in leaps and bounds. The problem of interpretation of Biblical texts keeps complicating with passage of time, as well as in context.

The rate at which present day preachers and religious leaders in Nigeria and particularly in Abia State interpret the Scripture arbitrarily is alarming. While some interpret for a balanced Christian living, others interpret it for academic, historical, even for economic reasons. Some others use it as a way of boosting

their ego as the happening “man of God” in town. Some preachers do it also to be in full control of their members, and to attract more membership by telling the people what they wish to hear. One of the things the people want to hear is that their plight, misfortune and endless struggles in life are caused by evil attack or witchcraft from their relations and neighbours. Some others claim it is as a result of the sins of their forefathers. Obielosi & Mgbemena (2015) see economic motives behind the trend, thus: “Because of the crushing hardship bedevilling our nation, some have created imaginary God and are living in utopian world. Most so called men of God seize the opportunity to loot the already wounded flock through prosperity preaching and false prophecies” (p.39).

Looking at it from most angles, the common man is still the victim at the end of the day. Most recently, the blame has shifted to names people bear as individuals, families and communities; especially native names which are interpreted as satanic, evil and fetish. The names of Biblical figures and characters surrounded by any negative impression like Job and Jacob for them could be a hindrance to progress in life. The fear is that there could be a repeated ugly history. This development is probably fanned by the significance and cultural weight a name carries in most cultures like in the African Igbo cosmology. Achebe (1975) said, “If you want to know how life has treated an Igbo man, a good place to look is the names his children bear; his hopes, his

fears, his joys and sorrows and even historical records are there” (p.164). From this comment, it is clear that the name of an African Igbo person also carries a history, and to get rid of such name is to mutilate history which is cherished so much among the people. Some preachers today use scriptural texts like Jacobean narrative in Genesis chapter 32 as a reference case for the propaganda against native names. They claim that for one to prosper as a Christian he must emulate Jacob by changing his name. In Genesis 32 Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, but this is from this study an aetiological narrative.

The way and rate at which this trend is increasing, coupled with the level of social disharmony this kind of Biblical interpretation has created, and is still creating is alarming in most areas of Igbo land with particular reference to Abia State. The concern for the problems created by such trend presently and in order to save the future society aroused the interest of this research. The Old Testament as a basic literary reality is comprised of records of traditions, cultures and religion of the Jews which Christians adopted as part of their Holy Writ. Just like every classical document, the Old Testament requires interpretation, especially as it is an adopted material. This is most imperative considering the passage of time and distance from the place where the documented traditions originated (the Bible world).

A skilful study is necessary if Old Testament narratives like Genesis 32 are to be rightly interpreted and applied. Every Old Testament narrative has a

genre where it belongs out of which the intention and purpose are derived. Fretheim (1983) rightly observed that, “Many attempts to expand the contemporary relevance of scriptural themes or passages pay scant attention to the intentions of the texts themselves” (p.5). Initially Biblical criticism and interpretation were based on dogmatic and theological approaches. The critics of those times could not make headlines in an era with a line of thought and view that the Bible was a bundle of written documents parcelled down from heaven and totally devoid of human culture and sentiments. At a point, the ravaging speed of immanentism (a philosophical stand which claims that reality could be explained by a set of scientifically formulated rules, order and pattern; thereby exalting human intellect and senses to an idolized status) aroused intellectual reactions based on issues like Biblical studies.

The whole development was an intellectual attack against the extremity of rationalism and empiricism which were vehemently opposed to serious issues like supernatural reality. This sudden development of critical mind-set and intellectual impetus gave rise to coded interests in natural sciences, and thereby fanned the flames of scepticism over the inerrancy and cosmogony of the Scripture. The trend gave rise to the discovery of other sources of cosmic chronology other than the OT accounts by the efforts of historians and archaeologists especially from the geography and topography of Palestine. Suelzer & Kselman (2011) observed thus:

From the 18th century on, new methods of the study and analysis of ancient literatures prepared the way for higher criticism, the analysis of literature in terms of origin as well as content and for the subsequent study of the bible according to the criteria used in the criticism of profane literature (p.1114).

Scriptural interpretation therefore remains a challenging task and has witnessed attention from different quarters and eras especially when it comes to who wrote what, when, why and how? Basically, every text has a sender, a message and a receiver. The sender has an intention; the message passes through the rigours of communication and the receiver battles with his background as well as the intricacies and shackles of interpretation. This was why the Middle Ages witnessed four types of interpretation of a text namely, the literal, the allegorical, the eschatological and the moral senses of the Scripture.

Consequently, Bible scholars made brilliant efforts to arrive at various approaches and methods over the years to aid Scriptural interpretation, ranging from Historical-Critical Approaches to the most recent New Critical approaches. When interpreting a text, three worlds are put into consideration, which are the world from where the text grew, the world created by the text and the world of the reader. Though there is the leverage for Scriptural interpretation granted by the development of redaction criticism, it is more appropriate to consider some factors before assigning meanings to Biblical texts. Redaction is a critical approach on how authors and editors of mostly the

Gospels handle the sources available to them in consideration with their personal theological biases. They are not to be seen as mere compilers, collectors and transcribers but as creative and critical minded theologians who were intelligent enough to handle and expound on sensitive information at their disposal in such a careful way as not to tamper with the essence. In the OT redaction reconstructs tradition into larger narrations, which is evident in Genesis 32. However, more care ought to be taken with interpretation especially when social unity, peace, harmony as well as personal faith are involved. The first step in interpretation is discovering the genre to which the text belongs of which Genesis 32 narrative deserves to be interpreted from aetiological standpoint.

When any Biblical interpretation ignores a systematic procedure and fails to address the real essence of religion which borders on lasting peace and cordiality in human relations, it could be misleading. The fact remains that the authors and editors of OT narratives made use of literary types and styles commonly called genres to pass their messages. They used myths, poems, proverbs, psalms, and aetiologies. The Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is aetiology with elements of legend, myth, saga and theophany. The legendary figure of the narrative is Jacob; the myths are found in verses 2, 24 and 32 which are symbolical of human beings meeting with spirit beings through inexplicable ways. A saga is a long narrative with historical framework. Jacob's

narrative which covers over ten chapters in Genesis fits in as a saga; it all culminated in chapter 32 and could be regarded as aetiological saga.

There are four basic aetiological segments in Genesis 32. The first aetiology is the explanation of *Mahana'im* (מַחֲנִים) in verse one. The second aetiology is the explanation of the name *Israel* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) in verse 28 according to RSV translation. The third aetiology is the explanation of the reason for the name *Penu'el* (פְּנוּאֵל) in verse 30. The fourth aetiology is the explanation of the origin of the dietary prohibition tradition in verse 32. This goes to show that it is not just enough to pick verse 28 and prescribe change of name as a condition for prosperity and fortune as some modern preachers do, but to first place the text at the genre where it belongs to enhance proper hermeneutics, failure of which is the bane of this research. Aetiologies may not be based on historical facts, but they are narratives or tales meant to explain the origin of historical monuments. The authors of the Bible had to make use of the sources at their disposal to create the scenes in order to capture the attention of their audience. One of the tales or narratives containing aetiological framework is the Jacobean narrative cycle and particularly Genesis 32. The first Jewish thinker to arrive at this knowledge in the 5th century was R. Joseph Albo, who noted that the stories of the Eden garden are meant to account for the difficulties of life that human beings experience. Therefore, in order to draw the attention of modern scholarship to the increasing rate of assigning meanings unilaterally to

Scriptural texts, and the effect of such applications to human relations with some references to Christians of Igbo extraction in Abia state. The work calls for a revisit to placing scriptural texts according to their literary genres using Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as platform for aetiological discourse.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The recent increase in isolating Biblical passages and assigning meanings arbitrarily by preachers has become a social concern in Nigeria and particularly in Abia State. The Bible is in no doubt a literary reality, and needs some level of skilful approach to be interpreted. The influence of the contents of the Scripture on adherents cannot be overemphasized. The major problem of Biblical scholarship has remained interpretation. Behind every Biblical text is an author, a geographical milieu and a receiver. The use of literary forms, styles and genres by Biblical writers to convey their message has complicated the problem the more. The OT authors have a way of writing that allows the reader at certain points to fathom the rightful conclusion of certain issues including the theological intentions behind a narrative. Passages like Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 contain elements of legend, saga, theophany and aetiology. The hallmark of the narrative is the aetiological explanation of the origin of the name of the chosen people of God 'Israel'.

The believer most often depends on the religious leader to understand the message behind a Scriptural text. In the recent times the emphasis by preachers mostly among African Christians has been on prophecies and deliverance from ancestral curses as conditions for a believer to prosper both economically and spiritually. Most recently there has been a paradigm shift of emphasis towards the name people bear as a determinant of their fortune. Biblical passages like Genesis 32 have been used to support this claim. This style of Scriptural interpretation has plunged many individuals and communities into socio-religious dilemma. The problem of this work borders on how a religious truth that is meant to bring lasting peace and harmony among believers is now the reason behind their conflict due to interpretation. The aetiological narrative in Genesis 32 was intended to serve the purpose of giving the name 'Israel' a historical origin and geographical footing by building the story around no mean personality and patriarch than Jacob. There is no imperative statement compelling any believer to change his name for material and spiritual prosperity all through the Bible, and much more in the Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32. Most often, direct commands are confused with implied meanings by some Biblical interpreters of average class.

There are no doubts over the existence of various cases of change of names in the Bible. A close study will reveals fundamental peculiarities behind each case. None of the cases indicate a direct injunction that a believer's economic

and spiritual prosperity is only guaranteed when he changes his name. For example, the change of names of Abram and Sarai (Gen.17:5, 15) was providential; that of Paul in the NT (Acts 13:9) was conventional: while the one of Jacob (Gen.32:28) was aetiologically circumstantial. However, there are many personalities of great worth in the Bible that retained their names which were not interpretatively fantastic, yet they were prosperous. For example, Mary or Marian means 'bitter' yet Moses' sister and Jesus' mother did not change their names. James is the Greek form of Hebrew Jacob and this name was prominent among the Disciples of Christ. Jesus changed Levi's name to Matthew and Simon to Peter but did not change James.

Change of name could occur when there is need and purposes but when it is interpreted as a condition for prosperity using Biblical texts like Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 that is the worry and problem of this work. The major reason behind insurgency and terrorism in Nigerian society today and the larger global community is religious, and it is basically as a result of indiscriminate interpretation of Holy Writs of major religions like Islam and Christianity. Adherents put their trust so much in religious leaders that they could kill for religious reasons if their leaders give such instruction. If the religious bigots are properly educated on the efficacy of religious tolerance to the human society there will be a higher degree of global peace which will affect every other sector positively.

The trend has presently resulted to religious leaders and preachers trying to interpret Scriptural texts like Genesis 32 in a way to impress the people to retain their membership as well as enhancing patronage. The Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is interpreted away from its aetiological intention to a direct command according to what the people want to hear partly because of desperation on the part of the people due to economic challenges. One of the things people want to hear is that their suffering is as a result of their forefathers' sins like in the days of Ezekiel where it is said that the fathers have eaten the unripe (sour) grapes, and their children's teeth are set on edge (Ezek.18:2). People of this time do not want to hear that, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:4). They do not want to hear that their sins have separated them from God (Isa.59:2); or that their wickedness will chasten them, and their apostasy reprove them (Jer. 2:19). For this reason some peddlers of the Gospel harp on the ensuing curiosity to extort the ignorant adherents of the faith.

Tracing the trend back to the OT times Ugwueye (2004) said, "The Old Testament shows how false prophets told kings exactly what they wanted to hear, to garner favour for their own personal gain" (p.69). The recent trend of telling people that unless they change the name they bear (especially native names) they would not progress materially and even spiritually has not only created a lot of social problems but is also dangerous for the future. The reference to the Old Testament Jacob whose name was changed to Israel in

Genesis 32 is the case in point. The interpretation that God could not bless Jacob until his name was changed to Israel deserves more attention. Biblical records show that Jacob was already blessed before that encounter. White (2014) observed that, “Part of the reason that so many hermeneutics exist is that interpreters have different goals” (p.4). In most cases the preachers use intimidation instead of conviction to impose a new name on the people or persons after creating tension and extorting them. Some people sell a landed property to pay the bill. Any family member who did not comply is considered as obstacle and an enemy of progress. He could eventually be accused as the cause of the misfortune or calamity, most especially if the person is well to do.

Some innocent persons have become suspects in such a way and this kind of development could trigger off a generational enmity among relations. In such situations the move instigates conflicting factions between those who accept the change, those who do not accept the change and those who stand neutral. It is discovered that in such communities the socio-religious, cultural and economic wellbeing of the people are affected negatively. It sometimes leads to legal actions and sanctions through the court of Law and protracted enmity, and this is counter-productive of the essence of religion.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

As Good (1981) remarked, “The Bible is a literature, whatever else it may be” (p.30). The general aim of this study is to survey the aetiological elements of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. Specifically, the work aims at:

- a) Discussing aetiology as a literary tool for interpreting Genesis 32 by way of critical response to the situation created by Biblical interpretation in Abia State-Nigeria.
- b) Examining aetiological composition of patriarchal narratives in the Pentateuch theology as a deliberate editorial tool with reference to Genesis 32 episode to enrich understanding of sacred texts.
- c) Investigating the mythical aetiology (theophany) in Genesis 32 by exegetical and discourse analyses to highlight the socio-cultural relevance of the Jewish OT worldview to Christians of Igbo extraction in Abia state-Nigeria.
- d) Exploring the literary and theological implications of Genesis 32 narrative as an aid to enhance the present day Biblical interpretation and application.

1.4 Significance of the Study

At the end of this study it would have been established that the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is an aetiology intended to explain the origin of some

socio-religious and cultural milieu in Israel at a certain time in their history as a nation. The content and recommendations of this study if adopted is therefore significant thus:

- a) Preachers and teachers of religion will be able to appreciate the essence of higher studies in religion and take the challenge to update their knowledge in such institutions, the cost notwithstanding.
- b) Preachers of all religious persuasions especially Christianity will be able to appreciate the extent to which their interpretation and application of Scriptural texts and beliefs could affect the social peace, harmony and progress among the adherents of religious teachings, especially when it comes to monumental issues like change of names with reference to Biblical narratives like the one of Jacob in Genesis 32. The essence is to distinguish between literary genres in OT style of writing to aid interpretation and application and check the socio-religious tension already created in places like Abia state-Nigeria.
- c) The government will see the need for the inclusion of the introduction to the original languages of the Bible such as Hebrew and Greek just as English, Arabic and French languages are compulsory. This will enable more Christians to have the rudimental knowledge of editorial intentions behind Scriptural texts like Genesis 32 instead of always

depending on other interpreters to avoid conflict among Christians as is the present case in Abia state and other parts of the globe.

- d) The government will also see the need to offer grants to theological institutions and religious departments of higher institutions of learning, knowing that religion remains the conscience of the society which will in turn determine how people will respond to government policies. In other words, when social harmony is disrupted based on religious matters it will definitely affect government activities like the present Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern part of Nigeria.
- e) The religious preachers and adherents round the globe and particularly in Abia state-Nigeria will appreciate the fact that interpretation and application given to a Sacred text like the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 change of name will definitely affect the human relations of the people, and therefore should take time and study, ask questions and do proper consultations before taking such measures as change of names. They should not be in a haste to change their names except after a well guided investigation and conviction, not just on the premise that their names are fetish enough to hinder prosperity, but to ensure that every decision to be taken as to change of name should take into accounts the social peace, harmony and progress of the people. For those areas already in conflict, there is need to adopt

dialogue, patience, tolerance, common sense, conflict resolution methods and precautionary measures as prescribed in this work.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The scope of this work covers the Jacobean narrative as contained in Genesis 32 made up of thirty-two verses where four aetiological episodes are addressed with the preliminary narration of the eventful reunion of Jacob and Esau after twenty years of separation orchestrated by sin of betrayal. The four aetiologies are recorded from verses one to thirty-two; they are narratives meant to explain the origins of the names of places common with the OT people of God namely (i) *Mahana'im* (ii) *Jabbok* and *Penuel*; (iii) the origin of the name of God's people as *Israel* shifting from the probable etymological connotation of "may God rule or God rules" to "you have struggled" or God strives" and (iv) the aetiological explanation of tradition of dietary prohibition among the people of Israel. References will be made to relevant Scriptural texts, especially the Pentateuch theology within which the Patriarchal narratives are intertwined, a corpus from which root the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 derives, with Jacob figure himself being an outstanding Jewish Patriarch. For the purposes of localization of study some practical cases of affected areas of arbitrary interpretation of Biblical texts like

Genesis 32 in Abia State-Nigeria will be cited through personal communications. The persons may not all be indigenes of Abia state, but it is necessary because the problem of study is now a global issue.

1.6 Methodology

In considering the aetiological discourse of the Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32, the researcher consulted and made use of various sources, including the Old Testament extra-Biblical commentaries and personal communications for data collection. Data analysis and presentation followed the weaving together of the source materials, using aetiological narrative discourse approach. The combined integration of such methodical tools as principles of historiography, exegesis, hermeneutics, and redaction criticism based on the relevant theories of Gunkel, Blum and Childs were helpful to x-ray the aetiological significance of Genesis 32 to the contemporary Nigerian society with particular reference to Abia State.

1.7 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of clarity, there is the need to define and explain some key concepts used in this work as they are related together within the work. Some of such words with regular reoccurrence are 'Narrative', 'Aetiology' and

‘Discourse’; hence, the aetiological narrative of Genesis 32 is discussed using a discourse approach.

a) Narrative

The author of Genesis 32 made use of narrative literary style to convey his message; therefore the word narrative will be in use throughout this work. A narrative is a long story that provides and accounts for connected events aimed at explaining something (explicit), or implying (implicit) something. The Jacobean narrative is a long story with many events weaved together for a purpose. When we use the word ‘narrative’ in this work we mean the story of Jacob as contained in the Old Testament (Gen.32) except otherwise stated. We could also refer to it as simply ‘Jacobean story’ or ‘Jacobean narrative’. Jewish scholars made use of different types of literature to develop, preserve and transmit their religious and cultural heritage and made frantic efforts to give them historical footing, the Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 is an example.

There are many types of narratives used by Old Testament authors and editors. Every definition of a narrative has a way of reflecting the type of narrative in question. In this work we are mostly concerned about aetiological narratives as contained in the Old Testament Jacobean story, and particularly in Genesis 32. Karmode and Alter (1990) said,

The Hebrew Bible, though it includes some of the most extraordinary narratives and poems in the Western Literary tradition, reminds us that literature is not entirely limited to story and poem, that the coldest catalogue and the driest aetiology may be an effective subsidiary instrument of literary expression (p.16).

A narrative therefore is a vehicle used to convey and concretize ideas that influence the faith and life of a people. A narrative could be preserved in oral or written traditions. A narrative is a long story told by a narrator over an issue, or event. A narrative could be transmitted from one generation to another. Kirkpatrick (2007) adds that a narrative could also often be seen as an accompaniment to filmed, acted or written events to connect them. Narratives are the commonest type of writing in the Old Testament. They refer to about forty percent of the Old Testament, like Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, 1&2 Sam, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Daniel, Jonah, Haggai, and some prophetic writings. Some narrative types used by Old Testament editors in the Pentateuch are metaphor, fiction, simile, personification, imagery, hyperbole, alliteration, aetiology and theophany. Narratives are purposeful stories retelling the historical events of the past that are intended to give meaning and direction for a given people in the present. When a narrative is intended to explain some cultic, cultural, customary and traditional monuments of a people like the Jacobean story in Genesis 32 it becomes aetiological narrative.

What people do in narratives is not necessarily a good example for us to use frequently. Most of the Old Testament characters are far from perfect and their actions also. The narrators' choice of characters and images are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given. What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for his audience. Most often the ethical justification of a narrative is left to the judgement of the reader. For example, the narrator of the Jacobean cycle carefully avoided the ethical implications of the character 'Jacob' from impersonating his brother Esau and taking his blessings, thereby deceiving his blind old father, to the manipulation that attracted to his side majority of the flocks of Laban. There was no evidence of deliberate remorse and repentance, yet there was a continual divine visitation and blessings that were irrevocable which is typical of Yahwist tradition.

There are four basic elements of a narrative (i) A narrator who chooses what to write and what to leave out. (ii) A scene: The environment, atmosphere (surrounding the narratives) and phenomenon upon which the story is told. (iii) A plot must have a beginning (prologue/introduction), a middle (body) and ending (epilogue). However, Hebrew plots are usually fast moving and reaches its peak very quickly. It is initially to discover the major plot of each scene in a narrative (sub plots) and how they fit into the overall plot of the narrative intentions. (iv) Major and minor plot characters form the nucleus of Hebrew

narratives. God is the hub of every narrative around whom other characters rotate. Then we have the character of opposing values either for emulation or admonition. The Jacobean narratives are the stories surrounding the man Jacob, the second son of Isaac who by supplanting took away his twin brother Esau's first son birth right. The Jacobean narrative has God at the centre with Jacob as a character of many parts. Sometimes he could be emulated, like his commitment in prayer at Bethel, and sometimes to be detested like when he deceived his father; while sometimes the reader is allowed freedom to judge, like in his encounter with his maternal uncle Laban.

The Jacobean narrative implied in this work starts from his birth narrative; his encounters with his brother (Esau), his father (Isaac), his maternal uncle Laban, as well as his strange experiences at Bethel and Jabbok. Detestable characters are those of Rebecca (Jacob's mother), who thought him to deceive his aged blind father; Laban, his maternal uncle who tricked him by giving him Leah in place of Rachel, and his two sons Simeon and Levi who committed genocide against the people of Shechem by way of revenge. A narrative is not the story itself but rather the recounting or retelling of the story, while the story is just the sequence of events. Narratives shape history; a narrator can leave out some occurrences because for him they are insignificant while he perhaps emphasizes others.

Narratives are found in all forms of human creativity and arts, like speech, writing, songs, photography et cetera. *Wikipedia, the free Encyclopaedia* defines a narrative as any report of connected events, actual or imaginary, presented in a sequence of written or spoken words, and or in a sequence of pictures. Narratives could be used to guide behaviour and transmit cultural history, formation of a communal identity and values. In this work we see the Jacobean narratives as vehicles with which Biblical authors explained the social-cultural, religious and national identity of the people of Israel by aetiological analysis.

Jacobean narrative therefore, is an expression used in this work to represent the life journeys of Jacob the twin brother of Esau, the sons of Isaac. The cycle is an extensive one; hence it stretches from Genesis chapters 27 to 35. It is a cycle in the sense that the hero who from the oral stage of the narrative left home for fear of threat on his life by his brother whom he robbed of his birth right travelled from Beersheba (Canaan) to far north Paddan-Aram (Haran) through Bethel, a rigorous desert journey and returned after twenty years back to Canaan where he spent the rest of his life. He left a bachelor and returned not only married but with two households (camps). He left a sinner but returned a saint. He left fugitive but returned as a hero. He left a pauper but returned a wealthy man.

Above all, he left as *Jacob* (a supplanter/cheat) and returned as Israel (God strives/rules). The narratives are also referred to as a cycle in the sense that they point to recurrent descriptions, explanations and interpretations of the socio-cultural, political and religious life of the people of Israel. They are regarded as a cycle for the presence of similarities of events or repeated episodes: for example, tricks upon tricks, change of names both of person and places with the authorial-reader friendly explanations; as well as mystical encounters, swearing of oaths and erection of cultic altars. At the end of the day the cycle celebrates the superiority of Jacob over the inhabitants of the northeast and the people of Edom represented by Esau.

Bandstra comments that Jacob left Canaan for Haran and returned with great wealth and a large family back to Canaan suggests a stronghold and tenuous on the land and separation was an inevitable experience. Perhaps the ancestral periods of exile and return shaped the hope of the Israelite who underwent their greatest trial in the Babylonian exile. This aetiological narrative is used to project Israel as authentic inhabitants of the land of Canaan. Okwesili (1987) said,

Esau represents the Edomites who settled in the south of Palestine and thus become the older brother. Jacob the younger represents the Israelites who settled in the land of Canaan later than the Edomites. The struggle in the womb between Esau and Jacob is a reference to the continual struggle between the Edomites and the Israelites in Canaan. The struggle

continued until David silenced the Edomites and forced them to pay tribute to him as vassals of Israel. This is the setting for understanding the elder brother serving the younger. Edomites the earlier settlers served or paid tributes to the Israelites the later settlers (p.27).

From the above statement it is clear that the narratives as we have them in the OT are reports of events that already took place in history of Israel as they struggled to gain identity in the midst of other nations. Ross believes that Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 represents the history of how only divine blessing as bestowed on Jacob at Jabbok gave Israel victory over her hostile neighbours. The Jacob-Esau conflict is, among other things, a story of the origin of Israelites animosity with Edomites. Bandstra thinks that by recognizing that Jacob stands for all Israel, one might expect the story also to be saying something about the nation, it is either that Israel is shown to have worked assiduously hard to secure a blessing or that Israel had all along fought others as Jacob was wrestling with God. In addition, Ross (1985) said, “The point of the story for the nation of Israel entering the land of promise is clear: Israel’s victory will come not by the usual ways nations gain power, but by the power of the divine blessing” (p.352).

b) Aetiology

Aetiology is simply, a long narrative which is meant to explain the origin of a socio-cultural or religious monument, event or any phenomenon resting in antiquity. It is the study of causation or origination. Alter (1990) said, “Aetiological tales are primitive attempts to explain puzzling realities of a narrative; and such condescension has frequently been reflected in scholarly treatment of the Bible” (p.17). Aetiology (*litiologia*) sometimes spelled ‘etiology’ is from a hybridised two Greek words ‘*aitia*’ meaning ‘cause’ or ‘origin’ and ‘*logos*’ meaning ‘word’ or ‘study’. It is a term used to describe or label stories which could also be referred to as ‘etiological tales’ which explain the reason for something being (or being called) what it is. For example, in the Old Jewish creation story (Gen.2:23), woman (אִשָּׁה) given that name because she has been taken out of the (side or rib of) man (אָדָם).

Aetiology is most commonly used in medical and philosophical theories where it is used to refer to the study of why things like diseases occur, or even the reasons behind the way things act. It is also used in physics, psychology, government, geography, spatial analysis, theology and biology with regards to the causes of various phenomena. However, in this study aetiology serves as a tool for interpreting the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 with the intention to arrive at a possible solution to the recent change of name controversy in places like Abia state. There is also an aetiological myth which is intended to explain a

name or create a mythic history for a place or family. An aetiological myth, or origin myth, is a myth intended to explain the origins of cult practices, natural phenomena, proper names and the like. In some instances aetiology is seen as a form of mythological genre. Hornby (2010) defines myth as a traditional story, typically involving supernatural beings or forces or creatures which provide an explanation, aetiology, or justification for something such as the early history of society, a religious belief or ritual, or a natural phenomenon. Some scholars agree to this view, like Lindemans (1999) who observed that: “Etiological tales are very close to myth, and some scholars regard them as a particular type of myth rather than as a specific category. In modern usage the term aetiology is used to refer to the description or assignment of causes” (p. 6).

Aetiology is a literary genre common with Old Testament authorship. It became a classified literary genre in the era of biblical criticism. The original authors or editors might not have been familiar with the term but were engaged in doing what they knew best how to do at their time to pass on their intended information in a particular form for easy assimilation. Aetiologies may not be based on historical facts, but they are narratives or tales meant to explain the origin of something else. The authors of the Bible had to make use of the sources with literary types and forms at their disposal to create the scenes in order to draw the attention of their audience as redaction criticism holds. One of the tales or narratives containing aetiological framework in the OT is the

Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. Aetiology in the field of literature is systematic attempt to explain the origins of some customs or institutions, some monuments or natural phenomena. Jacobean story in Genesis 32 is therefore aetiological narrative. The basic questions aetiology tries to answer are ‘why’ and ‘how’ something came to be what it is presently, and it often follows a popular but an unscientific method of response. Lindemans (1999) said: “An aetiological narrative is a story that purports to explain in mythic, religious, or literary terms the origin of something. It is, in other words, an imaginative story triggered by a question about how or why something came to be in the world” (p.6).

Old Testament narratives show two basic formulae which refer to the giving of a name and a reason for it. Aetiology is simply the study of causation or origination. In 1922, Herman Gunkel included aetiology in his list of six kinds of narratives in Genesis which reflect an early poetic and oral stage of a given past. Ross (1983) said, “Aetiological motifs do occur in general in the Bible, especially in Genesis which explains the beginning of many things” (p.19). Much as Yahweh’s portion is his people and Jacob is the share of his heritage (Deut. 32:9), in the Jacobean narrative cycle, Esau and Jacob are eponymous figures who bear the names of the nations they embody. There is no clearer instance in Genesis of an eponymous aetiology than the story of the birth of the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Eponymy is the act of naming a people

or race after a historical figure, personality or legend which is common in OT authorship. This same cultural phenomenon is common among Igbo people where Abia state belongs. It is not difficult to trace the ancestor of a clan or community because the term '*Umu*' meaning children (of) often prefix the common noun. For example, descendants of a man whose name was '*Duru*' may conveniently bear the name '*Umuduru*' meaning 'children of' or 'descendants of' *Duru*.

In this work 'aetiology' as a concept will be used as the basis for analysing the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32, in order to show that biblical authors had their freedom in adopting various literary forms to communicate their intentions to their original hearers. This will help modern interpreters of scripture, especially contemporary religious leaders and preachers in Abia state to secure a basis for enhanced hermeneutics when texts are first classified according to their genres. Alter (1981) said, "When one is dealing with a text so bare of embellishment and explicit commentary, one must be constantly aware of features through which one part of the text provides oblique commentary on another" (p.21). Narratives like Jacob's story in Genesis 32 when placed on the prism of aetiology will offer a better application than mere literal interpretation; a comprehensive definition of aetiology will attest to this fact. Lindemans (1999) said:

An etiological narrative offers a mythic explanation for the origin of something as opposed to a historical or scientific explanation and thus frees an individual or culture from defining something in strictly historical or scientific terms. In other words, an etiological narrative gives reign to poetry, dream states, imagination, and associative creativity. It is the language of origins liberated from the constraints of history and science. (p. 4).

Lindemans opinion is apt as far as interpretation of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is concerned, and unless the passage is rescued from the grips of history and science the theological tension and curiosity raised by the narrative will linger in search of solution.

The Bible still occupies a very vital position as a Holy Writ and Book of faith; it remains the inspired and inerrant word of God despite literary criticism. The truth remains that the human factor in the conveyance of this divine package is undeniable either. The use of literary mechanism to enhance communication and understanding by the editors does not reduce the efficacy of the Bible. The appreciation of that fact helps for better assimilation of the message in the age of enlightenment such as ours. Every human religion, culture and tradition has elements of myths, folktales, fictions, aetiologies as means of storage for the origins especially when it has to do with the beginning of the interaction between humanity and divinity. The Bible is therefore a collection of traditions of the Jews, as well as their religion and culture. There must be a meeting point between man and God for a religious interaction; for the narrator

of the Jacobean story in Genesis 32 the choice is aetiology. The ability to balance the two gives a greater advantage to both the interpreter and the believer; hence the choice of the genre does not undermine the truth the Bible conveys, and does not guarantee for unilateral and isolated interpretation of texts. Lutzer (1998) said:

If the bible is based on facts we have hope for our present crisis in religion and morality. If not, we must truthfully accept the despair of modern man who believes that there are no universal truths that can be found. Is truth something that I have to make up according to my liking, or is there an objective standard of rightness? (p.11).

Lutzer's statement shows that if the understanding and interpretation of Biblical texts takes into cognisance the already established rules, the result will remain the same everywhere.

c) Discourse

A discourse is a form of communication of thought by words. It is a systematic way of understanding or reasoning; it is a thinking process and pattern. Discourse stems from the French 'discourse' or Latin '*discursus*' which literally means 'running about' and the late Latin 'conversation' from past participle '*discurrere*' which means 'run about'. Discourse is a coinage of two words *dis* (apart) and *currere* (to run), in other words moving forward by moving round. A discourse denotes written and spoken communication like (i)

Semantic and discourse analysis which is, a conceptual generalization of conversation within each modality and context of communication (ii) The totality of codified language (vocabulary) used in a given field of intellectual enquiry and of social practice, such as legal discourse, medical discourse, religious discourse et cetera, and (iii) In the work of Michel Foucault from the angle of a social theoretician, discourse is described as “an entity of sequence, of sign, in that they are enunciation, statements in conversation. A discourse is composed by semiotic sequences (relations among signs that communicate meaning) between and among objects, subjects and statements.

Pinkus (1996) defines discourse as ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which are inherent in such knowledge and relations between them. He sees discourse as the creation of meaning system which has gained status and currency of truth defining how people are organised among themselves and in their social world. It is therefore evident that discourse is a means or vehicle of interaction or relationship between object and subject or within subjects as presented by the object. Foucault developed the concept of the discursive field as part of his attempt to understand the relationship between language, social institutions, subjectivity and power. For him, a discourse is capable of producing knowledge dissent and difference as well as new knowledge and difference. Some scholars define discourse in the light of a higher mental

exercise than just chains of reasoning. For example, Weedon (1987) sees discourse as “more than ways of thinking and producing meaning which constitutes the nature and the body, unconscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern” (p.108).

Collins Online English dictionary (2016) defines discourse as a formal treatment of a subject in speech or writing, such as a sermon or dissertation. In other words, it means raising arguments for exchange of ideas or an extensive interactive communication often dealing with a particular topic. Discourse is communication of thought by word; talk; or conversation. It could also be an address of a religious nature usually delivered during a church service or talk at great length about something of one’s interest concerning a topic. Suffice it to say that discourse is a formal and lengthy treatment of a subject matter either written or spoken or generally but concisely the process of power of reasoning. That is a pattern or channel or systematic reasoning or presentation of ideas. It is a rational method of presenting a subject matter. Discourse could be said to be a mental craft capable of drawing or stretching any subject matter to reasonable limits other than simply presented. This is evident in this work which undertakes to treat the Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 as aetiology through the instrumentality of a discourse. According to Jorgensen & Philips (2002) the word ‘discourse’ is general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in

different domains of social life. This definition helps the nature of this work in the sense that the pattern of presentation follows the OT language structure of biblical analysis of the Pentateuch in the domain of patriarchal era where the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is situated.

The Humanities and the Social Sciences make use of the term 'discourse' as a formal way of thinking that can be expressed through language; the discourse is a social boundary that defines what statements can be said about a topic. This research while in progress will reveal other socio-cultural and religious antecedents of a discourse because a discourse affects a person's perspective. It is rather impossible to avoid discourse in human relationship and interaction. Discourses are embodied in different rhetorical genres and meta-genres that constrain and enable them, that is, language talking about language. Discourse means defining reality itself. Discourse is a body of text meant to communicate specific data, information, and knowledge. There are internal relations in the content of a given discourse as well as external relations among discourses which make it difficult to have a general consensus of its definition. However, different perspectives offer their suggestions and to an extent compete to appropriately offer their own suggestions. And to some extent also compete to appropriate the term 'discourse' and 'discourse analyses' for their own way of defining a discourse as a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of the world.

A discourse may not exist in itself, but is related to other discourses, by way of inter-discursivity in the course of intellectual enquiry. Discourse is just one among many aspects of any social practise based on the dynamism of language structure especially when it involves the concept of inter-textuality or how an individual text draws elements and discourse of other texts. This explains why in this work great effort is made to draw strength from the patriarchal narratives to express meaning in discussing the aetiology of Jacobean narratives of Genesis 32. This view is in line with the claim by structuralist and post-structuralist linguistic philosophy that reality could always be accessed through language out of which representations of reality that are never mere reflections of pre-existing reality are created. The lingual influence helps in constructing reality, and this view has no intentions of denying the existence of reality in meaning representation.

Discourses among researchers feature the questions and answers of ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ conducted according to the meanings (denotation and connotation) of the concepts (statements) used in the given field of enquiry. Discourse is one of the modern interdisciplinary approaches on formal presenting and analysing topical issues in areas such as religion, medicine, politics, psychology, anthropology, ethnography, sociology and cultural studies. For scholars and with particular reference to Philips (2015), there are generally four modes or types of discourse; they include narration, description, exposition

and argumentation. In narration discourse a story is told to make the audience think differently about a certain topic in form of a play, novel, folktale or myth from where the information gradually unfolds either through a person or character perspective. Description discourse relies more on the five human senses to illustrate or describe something so as to enhance good memory. Exposition discourse has a form of information whereby a topic is systematically presented to the audience through definition, analysis, compare and contrast, cause and effect or problem and solution approaches. While argumentation discourse is a situation whereby through writing or speaking a composer attempts to convince an audience over a personal opinion by using deductive or logical approach and passionate appeal to the sense of reason with well packaged and orderly presented evidence to achieve a premeditated goal.

The nature of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 shows that the most appropriate approach though not in outright isolation is narrative discourse. The passage itself represents an outcome from a quest by Israel in their later generations to know how they came to acquire the name (Israel) they bear, how they came to settle in the Ancient Near East (ANE); their relationship with the people of Edom with whom they were in constant struggle as well as other surrounding nations. The curiosity also includes the reason behind the dietary prohibition of an Israelite from eating the muscle of the hip or the sciatic joint. The narrator or perhaps editor deployed narration which is one of the literary

forms common in the OT literature to respond to the clarion quest of a younger generation of the chosen people of God. In this work therefore, we shall through a narrative discourse analyse the Jacobean story in Genesis 32 on the platform of aetiological prism for better interpretation and contextualisation of scripture in Abia state and round the globe. This will help to check the change of name controversy in Abia state, in Nigeria and round the globe.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter considers some theories and literatures which are relevant in the study of the aetiological discourse of Old Testament Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. This is done under three dimensions, namely; Conceptual Framework, Theoretical Framework and Empirical Studies, with an addendum captioned as Summary of Review. It is pertinent to note that name change in Abia for religious reason is a recent development and as such lacks existing literature. Eluwa in his *Ado Na Idu* (2008) only made a passing statement to one of the affected communities hence his focus was on the history of Igbo origin. This work will however serve as an attempt to seeking a lasting solution to the devastating trend.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

In discussing this conceptual frame work, the focus is based on the conceptual ideas inherent in Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32 aetiology. Such ideas or themes are woven together with due consideration, and reference to already existing literature. The links and connections between those concepts and how they all relate help to make this work contemporaneously relevant. Such concepts to be considered here are: aetiological genre of Genesis 32; narrative structure of Genesis 32 and the concept of theophany in Genesis 32.

2.1.1 Aetiological genre in Genesis 32 narrative

Old Testament Biblical authors have been described by scholars in the light of using different styles, forms and genres in documenting their messages. The discovery of such classified similarities in documented materials has aided biblical scholarship from textual understanding, interpretation and application. Biblical criticism has remained the application of various skills, techniques, knowledge, wisdom and art to the corpus of Old Testament texts being examined. Through such methods scholars have discovered that the Old Testament contains such literary types as myth, legend, saga and aetiology. Our main concern in this work is aetiology, of which Old Testament authors while in the process of developing tradition employed different aetiological types. The use of aetiology as a tool in discussing the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 helps to solve some theological puzzles created by the editor. Otherwise, it would have been difficult to defeat Anderson (2011) proposition of the theology of deception and Yahweh's fidelity to the ancestral promise in the Jacob narrative. Anderson identifies God as an accomplice to the tricky and fraudulent antecedents of Jacob character by choosing him despite his character.

It is however, clear that to characterise God as deceptive requires a transfer of human weakness and failure to the Deity, and there is no evidence of this in the Jacob narrative or in Genesis as a whole. Anderson further observed that though there is a great deal of deception in the Jacob narrative, yet evidence

show that the narrator intended to imply that *Yahweh* was a trickster. Therefore, to treat Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as an aetiology helps to unravel the theological puzzle raised by Anderson who in chapter one of his publication identifies a problem in Jacob's prominence as a deceiver and asks how this can be reconciled with Jacob as elect patriarch (Gen.25:23), recipient of the ancestral promise (Gen. 28:13-15), namesake for the people Israel (Gen. 32:28; 35:10), chosen, accompanied and protected by God? For Anderson, it is not only Jacob who is portrayed as a deceiver but *Yahweh* is at times complacent to Jacob's deception which succeeded because the divine trickster supports him. However, Anderson (2011) tried to balance his opinion by concluding that, "However, this trickery should not be understood negatively because it is intimately referred to God's concern for the perpetuation of the ancestral promise" (p. 2). Well, the positive interpretation of trickery in any form is yet to be accepted, it is worse so to associate God with anything trickery in whatever guise.

Whatever interpretive problem and puzzle the narrator of Jacobean narrative created, the fact remains that they were a group of local editors dealing with their local kinsmen and folks in their own peculiar world in their innocence, and probably never anticipated that one day what they have done will attract such a universal and wide range scholarly scrutiny. This is a reaction to the question in the common mind on the authenticity and credibility of

Jacobean narrative as represented by Friedman (1986) who remarks that, the biblical story of Jacob is artistically an exquisite creation, psychologically an intriguing portrait, and religiously an interpretive treasure house which has always been a problem. Even Sunday school children ask why the hero Jacob, the great patriarch, withheld food from his own brother Esau to get his brother's birth right and thus lies to his blind Father Isaac on his death bed to get his father to give him his brother's blessing. And why did the ancient Israelite author tell the story this way, portraying his ancestor as manipulative of and deceitful to his family?

The Pentateuch contains other forms of aetiology; for example, in Genesis 28 and in Exodus 12:26 we see cultic aetiology. Legendry aetiologies are found in some traditions and customs built around the patriarchs. Certain forms of aetiology are incorporated into real historical events like in Joshua 4:9. There are also mythical aetiologies or aetiological myths carefully intended to explain the origins of cult practices, natural phenomena, proper names and the like which are also evident in Jacobean narratives of Genesis 32. Coogan (2012) said:

It may be taken, then, as a substantial hypothesis that the Jacobean narrative and perhaps the biblical narrative of similar form are to be understood as literary fictions, not only in the primary construction of the individual narrative segments but in the development of the larger complex tales of the patriarchal tradition.

Those historiography elements that occur in the narratives and in their transmission and development are similarly constructed on this essentially fictional literary basis. (p. 65).

The emphasis here is on the need to scrutinize scriptural texts by means of literary critical tools and methods. This fact however, does not undermine God's status as a free moral agent under whose unhindered control and outright volition the entire universe and activities are duly ordered. Consequently, to place a text in its appropriate literary genre in order to enhance proper interpretation and consequent application cannot be overruled. Genres refer to classes of texts grouped according to similarities in structure, content, mood and setting. Abbott (2004) said that one of the factors that determine how a story is interpreted is the decision that the interpreter makes about its genre.

Whereas Westermann (1981) sees the narrative as a formularised local story meant to explain the name *Penuel* or *Jabbok* which was built into the itinerary of Jacob's return, Coats (1983) describes the genre of the narrative as aetiology for Jacob's name change to Israel deriving from an aetiological myth with two secondary aetiologies attached. Despite various and varying interpretations, it is noteworthy that Jacobean story in Genesis 32 forms an integral part of a cohesive and complex of Jacobean narrative cycle. The numerous comments are reflective of the strategic place which the story occupied and its survival over the eras of editing and re-editing of the Old

Testament documentation and offer a concrete evidence of its theological relevance. However, describing the aetiological concept of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32, Childs (2000) developed the idea of “aetiological myth” which could also be referred to as ‘origin myth’. He describes aetiological myth as a story told with the intention to explain the origins of cult practices natural phenomena, proper names and the like. It is ideal at this point to observe that even if the literal interpreters of Genesis 32 hide under Child’s definition the ensuing conflicts across the land serve as enough evidence that the essence of Christian faith has been tampered with fundamentally.

Genesis 32 is a narrative intended to explain the origin of the proper name of the people God *Israel* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) and the dietary law which distinguishes them among other people. The cultic reflection of the story hinges on the mystic being from whose mouth the new name came and who touched the hip of the heroes to disfigure it and the hero’s exclamation of seeing *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) ‘face to face’. This history has been interpreted through religion. Okwueze (2008) said, “Simply put, the interpretative instrument of Old Testament history is religion. Thus in the Old Testament history, as *factual chronicle* is very clean. Here, historical events are special acts of God” (p.244).

When Barthes (1974) analysed the wrestle at Jabbok, he deduced conventions of folklore. Some other scholars like Barton (1996) see the text from the point of view of post-structuralist perspective with irreconcilable

ambiguities and indeterminacy. Abbott (2004) sees the assumption that the strange man who wrestled with Jacob as God as ambiguous and a tactful display of literary art by the narrator who safely identified the strange fellow as simply 'a man', for in it is a mystery. This goes to show that the sole intention of the narrative is most evidently to explain the origin of the name 'Israel'. This is why for some scholars like Von Rad (1973) the text took gradual developmental stages as modified by editors. McKenzie (1980) agrees with him and further figures out additional elements to the Old folklore. While scholars like Bruce (1987) see no relevance in interpreting a religious based pre historic event such as Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32; Ross (1983) was more interested on the evolutionary development of the Jabbok account, for him the opinion of a gradual development of ancient folklore greatly weakens a very vital point in the history of Israel and solves none of the existing tensions of biblical criticism.

The interpretive views against a gradual development of tradition strongly believe that an event of such magnitude as Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 must have been based on reality or else its import would have been lost long before Israel became a nation. Ross (1983) opinion however, does not deny the aetiological perspective of the narrative. This work however opines that while the nucleus of the story was retained over time which is a precise response to the quest for a historical origin of names and customs, the editors

commonly adopted the literary genre of aetiology to coat the reality in the event for easy assimilation by their immediate audience. Fretheim (1983) said, “The presence of aetiological materials is not commonly a reason for making a negative judgement regarding the historicity of the entire story to which it is attached” (p.32). Otherwise the reliability of the appearance of angels at Mahana'im; the wrestling with the strange anonymous fellow at Penu'el could be seen as empirically unfounded.

The aetiological implication of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is further displayed in verse 22 where mention is made of Jacob's eleven sons ignoring Dinah. This impression simply underscores a deliberate attempt to explain the aetiology of the name 'Israel' since each of Jacob's sons is eponymous of one tribe while Dinah has no role in the national identity of Israel. The aetiology of the dietary law is given the historical root as a sign of ancestral and Patriarchal authority since there is no such prohibition in the Mosaic Law. Steiner (1990) sees the Jacobean narratives as a product of editorial ideology of a clan. For him, the story points towards a rather complicated balance of moral claims in the rivalry using individual characters, a kind of ideological literature that incorporates a reflex of ideological auto-critique. It took the span of a century to analyse and exhaust theories of authorship and sources of the Old Testament. This academic task has remained a challenge even in the twenty first century.

Old Testament literary types and their view point create great barriers to the inexperienced reader. If necessary steps are not taken to clarify this confusion, mistakes of all kinds are likely to besiege the student and interpreter of the literature of the Old Testament from all sides. There is therefore a rising development of common use of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as a yardstick for change of name among Christian preachers, especially of Igbo extraction which is a textual interpretation that is yet to be reconciled with the context of the narrative, and there is little or no existing literary work on the subject. This is the gap in literature which this work wishes to fill.

Aetiologies are therefore, essential literary elements of many artfully complex and symbolically resonant stories in the Old Testament. The concept of aetiological genre in Genesis 32 offers the interpretative platform upon which the passage presents its central message which is the origin of the name 'Israel' as well as the dietary law. Fishbane (1975) said, "OT narrative rarely provides an explicit statement of the meaning of the events described. Literary clues assume even greater significance because they occur as an integral part of the interpretive context in which the events are reported" (p.130). The reader of OT text is however, at liberty to figure out the meaning and intention behind a text. This privilege of interpretation is not without a guide to avoid abuse of application, like forcing people to change their names because Jacob's name was changed to Israel in Genesis 32 aetiology. Wessner (2000) said, if the

formula until this day in verse 33 is also considered, the best conclusion is that the entire periscope functions as an aetiological folklore story in which the precise nature of Jacob's encounter at Jabbok acts as the supporting evidence for the central element: the name change from Jacob to Israel (p.172). The name change centrality of the narrative is captured in the skilful tensed dramatic dialogue between Jacob the protagonist of the story and the strange man hence:

The strange man: "Let me go, for the day is breaking" (v.27).

Jacob: "I will not let you go, unless you bless me" (v.27).

The strange man: "What is your name?" (v.28).

Jacob: 'Jacob'

The strange man: "Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed" (v.29).

Jacob: "Tell me I pray your name" (v.30). The strange man: "Why is it that you ask my name?" (v.30). This passage throws the light of a carefully arranged editorial intension by literary expression. The scene is so arranged that Jacob was left all alone to himself as the drama unfolds with no witness to confirm the reality of the combat and the pronouncement of the change of name and identity. Wessner added that the divinely initiated combat as well as the supernaturally induced lump serves as a God-sent physical sign to verify and legitimize the primary event of the periscope, that is, the change of Jacob's

name to Israel. For him, if this event must be taken for a theologically significant encounter, it requires some type of verification by God Himself. This is necessitated by the fact that inexplicable complexities in the narrative raise doubts over its literal authenticity. For example, scholars like Barthes (1984) looked at the story of Jacob wrestling with the strange man at Jabbok in consonance with the conventions of folklore. Barthes later got convinced by the perspective of post-structuralism which view the irrevocable ambiguities in the Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32 as an example of the indeterminacy which is inherent in all texts as championed by Barton (1996). Leupold (1942) agrees with Luther that the story of Jacob's narrative encounter at Penuel and his subsequent meeting with Esau is one of the most obscure in the Old Testament.

2.1.2 The Narrative concept and structure of Genesis 32

The Old Testament writers deployed the services of narratives as a veritable literary type in the conveyance of their messages. Genesis 32 is significant because it is one of the Old Testament passages that contain major component structures of a narrative. Structural criticism is more interested in discerning how the meaning of the text emerges from the ordered systems within which it is contextualised. Major component parts of a narrative present in Genesis 32 include long tale, integration and connectedness of accounts. The hero of the story and, a careful weaving together of ideas, concepts and literary genres like theophany and aetiology are used as vehicles of expression of

authorial intentions. Genesis 32 narrative structure displays an interesting literary approach whereby the proper identity of the strange man is overshadowed by how his mysterious feature impacts the story and expresses the editorial intention. All these narrative structural concepts shall be discussed in a verse by verse commentary of Genesis 32. The discourse in this segment will anchor on both the Hebrew (Kirsten Abbot 2004 version) combined with the new Jerome Biblical commentary and English translations (Revised Standard Version).

Verse 22—“The same night he arose and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed ford of Jabbok”. Here Jacob was busy crossing his family over the river and sending messengers with choice gifts of animals in order to appease his angry brother Esau. The reason behind the series of crossings from boundaries in Jacobean narratives has drawn scholarly attention without yet a consensus. This is because sometimes the descriptions render a confusing answer as for the particular geographical location and scene of such events like in Genesis 32:22. In such cases, it is more helpful to focus on the probable intention of the author which is aetiological explanations of traditions like in Genesis 32. The clause, “The same night” seems like an interconnection from the same night he encountered the angels of God (32:1) and his passionate prayer of confession and intercession. It is a common future

of Old Testament narrative concepts to link together events and activities as intended by the author. This is an indication that Jacob was restless over the probable outcome of meeting his brother. The omission of Dinah, Leah's daughter in verse 21 according to Abbott (2004) could probably be that the author of the narrative didn't know about her or more likely, may mean that daughters were not considered important enough to count. There could be an intention behind the story of crossing boundaries at the borders of the Promised Land with a similar experience to that of Bethel (28:10ff). The scene seems as a deliberate attempt to weave together various events surrounding a legendary hero to express how Yahweh has shown special interest to his own chosen people in times of awful challenges. The awesome atmosphere created in this scene helps the author to arouse the attention of the reader to anticipate the danger and mystery of the theophany yet to be unfolded in this narrative.

Verse 23—"He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had". After Jacob had sent everything across the stream he was said to be left alone. The environment and the setting here looks dark, dangerous and mysterious which looks like a deliberate setting of the scene for the next very important action of the narrative to capture a concept.

Verse 24—"And Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day". The reason for Jacob to be left alone here is not explained by the author. As usual with Hebrew writers the reader is left to the widest

imagination of his mind. Ordinarily when somebody is said to be left alone it could connote one being moody for meditation or contemplation especially when the cool hours of the night is involved. In this narrative the picture is painted in readiness to introduce the unknown man who will wrestle with Jacob and eventually change his name. The identity of this strange man has been an issue of serious puzzle and debate among scriptural interpreters. This again looks like it is a literary authorial creation to smoothly convey the message of the narrative using aetiology; otherwise the verifiability of this encounter is almost impossible. For Abbott, the interpretation of this segment of the narrative depends on the assumptions we make and the questions we put to the narrative. But one significant thing is the name or word play deployed by the author which is likely to be a deliberate editorial art. The names are of similar sounds and they are *Jacob* יַעֲקֹב (ya‘aqob); *Wrestle* יַעֲבֹק (ye‘abeq) and *Jabbok* יַבְבֹּק (yabboq). Playfully put, ‘Jacob’ must ‘wrestle’ someone at ‘Jabbok’. Wenham (1994) also playfully paraphrases the verse as “And Jacob was left on his own (at Jabbok) and a man Jacobed him”.

Verse 25—“When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him”. The wonder of the strange man continues in this verse with more complications in the sense that those who interpret the man as a spirit, an angel or God himself meet another serious puzzle; hence the Hebrew word for

spirit (רוח) is translated as wind or breath. The wonder ranges from how a spirit whom this work safely refers to as “the strange man” due to his role in the drama could physically fight with a mortal man to how a mere man could so withstand and overpower a spirit that the spirit will resort to a foul means of winning the tussle. This is probably another literary imaginative device to increase the sense of suspense and ambiguity in the narrative concept.

However, the author stretches the imagination of the reader to the intended explanation of the origin of the name *Israel*. For some scholars like Hamilton (1995) the word וַיִּגַּע (and he struck) from the root word וַיִּגַּע (a verb qal waw imperfect 3rd person’s masculine singular) which some translate as the action of Jacob’s assailant should be better taken as simply ‘and he touched’, which is a closer clue to the supernatural character of the strange man though both words could be used. Smith opines that the reference to the hip or thigh could be a euphemistic reference to an injury to Jacob’s genitals which indicates a connectivity to weave the Jacobean narrative with the patriarchal promise of procreation which determines the fate of the entire nation of Israel (Gen. 17:4-6).

Verse 26-“Then he said, let me go, for the day is breaking.” But Jacob said, I will not let you go, unless you bless me”. Another wonder here is that Jacob persisted in winning the tussle despite the hip dislocation to the extent that the strange man had to almost appeal to be released. Von Rad (2004) said, “It may

be an earlier version of the story, Jacob wounded the man, but when the man became identified with God, the story changed, because God could not be seen to be defeated by Jacob” (p.5). The scene is realistically puzzling and could be safely interpreted as imagery born out of editorial skill and creativity.

Verse 27—“And he said to him, what is your name? And he said ‘Jacob’. The idea of Jacob announcing his own name as ‘grabber’, ‘trickster’ and ‘supplanter’ is a sign of acceptance of a personality reality and revelation. This confession of name reveals an interconnection with Genesis 27:36 where Esau lamented over how Jacob supplanted him for a second time.

Verse 28—“Then he said, your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but ‘Israel’, for you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed”. In this verse is contained the crux of the narrative concept. In a careful artistic literary design the editor gradually unfolds the intention behind the long narrative which hinges on explaining the origin and the meaning of the name *יִשְׂרָאֵל* (Israel) a proper noun without gender, number or state translated to mean ‘God strives’, ‘God rules’, ‘God heals’ or ‘God preserves’. The same word according to Abbott (2004) could imply ‘the one made straight by God’ or ‘he saw God’. A careful reading of the patriarchal narratives will show the string of connection linking the events together with due consideration of the theological intention behind the texts. It looks like there is a serious combat here between Jacob and the strange man from his words, but it could also be a creative

representation of the sum of the life of the protagonist and character which has been full of struggles. We could see a parallel passage in Genesis 35:9-10 where God is directly quoted as changing Jacob's name to Israel as a preamble to the re-enactment of the patriarchal covenant promise, but this is taken as a secondary version of Genesis 32:28. At least it serves the purpose of solving the puzzle over the identity of the opponent of Jacob in Genesis 32:24.

The change of name from Jacob to Israel has been interpreted by many as synonymous with change of character of the person of Jacob. In ancient narratives, names revealed the characters of persons and sometimes believed to exert some influence over the person's character. While this could be true, this work posits that the stretching of same meaning and understanding in any and every situation could be detrimental. This view is informed by the fact that many people who bear names with negative etymological interpretations both in the bible times and in the present time retained their names and still seem to be on top of their destiny. Turner (2000) said, "Some interpreters have seen a change of character going along with Jacob's new name, but he is still generally called Jacob, and still appears to behave in a self-serving, grabbing, manipulative manner (e.g. Gen.33:12-17). The new name is more like a summary of his past" (p.3). For example, Mary the mother of Christ retained her name and actualized her destiny even when the name means 'bitter' or 'stubborn'. Jacob Zuma the president of South Africa is at the top of his destiny,

though he is recently facing charges for diverting public fund to personal use. But it is not enough to conclude otherwise since a visit to the prison yards today will offer a list of wonderful Christian names of known criminals.

More so, in the subsequent segments of Jacobean narrative the name Jacob was still retained even from the next verse up until today people like Jews and Christians still refer to Yahweh as the God Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, showing that the narrative is an aetiological piece meant to explain the origin of the name 'Israel'. This is unlike other texts where names were changed after which the new name took over entirely, as in the case of Abraham and Sarah (Gen.17:5, 15). Therefore, to see change of name as a condition for prosperity using the Jacobean narrative concept in Genesis 32 could not be said to represent an excellent theological interpretation of this scriptural text. For scholars like Turner the new name is more of a summary of Jacob's past.

Verse 29—"Then Jacob asked him, tell me, I pray your name, but he said, why is it that you ask my name? And there he blessed him". The strange man and the mysterious wrestler created by the author here refuse to reveal his identity to Jacob but chose to bless him. The scene of enquiry for identity, revealing of names, and blessing serves as a connecting link to an earlier episode where Jacob under a disguised identity collected his brother's blessing (Gen.27).

Verse 30—“Then Jacob called the name of the place *Peni’el* saying, for I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved”. Here comes another major aetiological expression in the Jacobean narrative concept. This verse seems to be a deliberate art by the editor to achieve a dual purpose of using the mouth of Jacob to clear the puzzling identity of the strange man (wrestler) as well as explain the origin of the name פְּנִיאֵל (Penu’el). The careful literary art exhibited by the editor here is overwhelming since he deliberately avoided a direct identification of the mysterious man but allowed Jacob to identify him as God. The identity of the strange wrestler is rather ambiguous since the narrator did not identify him as either God or an angel but just ‘a man’ in verse 24. The idea of not surviving after seeing God is a reflection of a common OT view and belief (Exod.33:20). The mentioning of saving a life links the scene to Jacob’s prayer to save him from his brother Esau earlier in the narrative (Gen.32:11). The art of weaving together of concepts is also linked to the scene of Jacob’s meeting with Esau where he likened seeing his brother’s face with seeing the face of God (Gen.32:20; 33:10). Blum (2012) sees the *Penu’el* encounter as the crux of the Jacobean narrative concept connecting the religious experience at *Bethel* and the meeting with Esau, thus:

The narrative refinement of the Penu’el episode exceeds that of any other part of the story of Jacob. It marks the centre of the last part between Jacob’s preparation and his meeting with Esau, but has a meaningful prelude in the short note about Jacob’s encounter with

the divine messengers at Mahanaim, which in turn mirrors the Bethel episode in several aspects (p.185).

Verse 31—"The sun rose upon him as he passed *Penu'el*, limping because of his thigh". The connection of the weather under which Jacob fled from home at sunset (Gen.28:11) and his return at sunrise signifying a new dawn in his new life is carefully captured here. The new life is captivated by the mysterious encounter which resulted to a change name, body posture and perhaps personality.

Verse 32—"Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh on the sinew of the hip". This last verse serves as another effort by the narrator to explain the origin of the prohibition of the Israelite from eating the sciatic muscle of an animal. This practice is not mentioned elsewhere in the Law of Moses or in the entire Old Testament. Westermann (1981) thinks that the prohibition could be due to the fact that this part of the body has to do with the reproductive organs. Alter (1996) observes that the identification of the Jewish hearers of this story with their ancestor Jacob (Israel) is strongly reinforced in this verse, with the first reference to the 'children of Israel', and the reference to the custom 'to this day'. Concerning the legal authority and acceptability of such customs and traditions inserted into tales and narratives for the daily cultic and social-cultural life a typical Jew, Lasor (1982) said, "The authoritative word gave the community its form and content in obedience to the

divine imperative, yet conversely the reception of the authoritative tradition by its hearers gave shape to some writings through a historical and theological process of selecting, collecting and ordering” (p.17).

These traditions existed long ago as oral traditions passing through many stages and forms of preservation before the era of documentation. The authors adopted several literary styles to convey their message, and one of those literary styles is aetiology. Fokkelman (1990) said,

For the Hebrew Bible quite frequently incorporates as integral elements of its literary structures kinds of writing that, according to most modern preconceptions, have nothing to do with literature; I am thinking in particular of genealogies, etiological tales, laws, including the most technical cultic regulation, lists of tribal borders, detailed historical itineraries (p.16).

The entire structures of Jacobean narratives are perhaps a deliberate attempt to render explanations to younger generations of Jews on how Yahweh has continued to deal favorably with his people. This is made clear with the repeated cycles of stories following the same pattern as posited by Fletcher’s basic formula theory. Terino in Maranatha (2013) said:

The overall structure of the Jacobean narrative moves from estrangement to reconciliation; while the overall framework poses the question of blessing in connection with the divine promises, the

narrative sequence takes the reader through a plot of conflicts, before the resolution can finally take place: conflict with Esau, conflict with Laban and conflict with the mysterious man (p.58).

The whole evidence borders on editorial impressions and dispositions over socio-cultural issues under strict theological influence and sensitivity.

2.1.3 The Concept of Theophany at *Penu'el* (פְּנוּאֵל) in Genesis 32

Peni'el (פְּנִיאֵל) also known as *Penu'el* (פְּנוּאֵל), rendered as proper noun with no gender, no number and no state homonym (Gen. 32:30), meaning “Face of God” was perhaps no exact place as it were. It is an aetiological nomenclature of a location imagined as not far from Succoth and east of river Jordan. This was the scene of the theophany which formed an integral part of the Jacobean narrative concept in Genesis 32. God is a supernatural being and in fact a spirit, immortal and invisible, while the nature of man is at variance with all of divine qualities. It is the duty of the editor to create a meeting point since both man and God are key objects in the Jacobean narratives. He therefore, made use of the sources available to him in addition to his artistic literary acumen by way of redaction to arrive at a tangible but imaginary platform to get his message across; and that platform as demonstrated in the Jacobean narratives is theophany which is common with the Pentateuch.

As Jacob set off on his journey back home, he was faced with the challenges of meeting Esau his brother whom he offended before he left home for about twenty years. As a good strategist Jacob divided his household into two camps and sent to Esau an elaborate gift from the Hebrew word *Minha* (מִנְחָה) which implies an offer meant to turn the face from offence committed against the receiver. The word ‘appease’ in this context is from the Hebrew verb root, כָּפַר meaning ‘to cover’ or ‘to atone’. The gift from Jacob to Esau consisted of five hundred and eighty beasts from choice herds and flocks. The *Minha* was also interpreted as a present given to a superior, with the intent of securing his ‘favour’ (חֵן) and good will, which could be interpreted as, ‘to atone’, ‘to cover his face’ or ‘to become blind to the offence’. Whatever the editorial intention here, or Jacob’s next game plan is not very clear. The curiosity is could only be remedied by the reported thought of Jacob in verse 20, thus: “For he thought, ‘I may appease him’ (אֶכַּפֵּרָה כְּנִיּוֹ) with the present that goes before me, and afterwards I will see his face, perhaps he will accept me”. In this encounter, Jacob was exceptionally courteous and conciliatory in his approach. He referred to Esau as ‘to my Lord’ לַעֲשׂוּלֵאֲדֹנָי and bowed seven times. After seeing his wives off, across the River Jabbok (a tributary to Jordan), he made a turn back to the north bank all alone in the dark. There is an authorial effort here to explain consistently, the aetiological history of the personality of Jacob, the protagonist of the narrative. Fishbane (1975) said, “Jacob is ever yet the

trickster, he arranges his camp to deceive his brother, he rushes to him and kisses him and offers him a gift” (p. 21).

In Genesis 32:24-31 is recorded the wrestle between Jacob and a man whose identify is unknown. The picture painted by the narrator indicates a divine encounter with an angel. Hosea 12:4 identified the strange man as an angel or a messenger מַלְאָךְ. Sauter (2014) opines that the Rabbis consent that the man was Esau. Great thinkers and scholars in their various classes have their various impressions on the identity of the combatant strange man. The Folklorists opine that the man was a mighty demon, holding that the story contains the remains of a very early mythic tale of a river spirit. Within many cultures, rivers were thought to possess a power that tried to thwart a crossing unless the river was appeased. Modern therapists suggest that the man was none other than Jacob himself. Scholars like Josephus interpreted the Jabbok episode as a dream in which Jacob wrestled an apparition who used a voice and words. Philo and Clement of Alexandria to a lesser degree opined that the struggle was only spiritual. Jerome believed the encounter to be a long and earnest prayer. The long debate remains strong efforts to reconcile the aetiological myth with historical fact. The historical worth evaluation theory of Albert Alt is relevant here; hence it recognises the role of various literary genres without doubting the presence of historical elements in OT narrative of Genesis 32.

Some other theologians say that the strange man was God, and Jacob himself also arrived at this same conclusion (32:30). In support to this view, Keil and Delitzsch (2000) suggest that, “Jacob’s opponent was divine and he refused to identify himself in order to heighten the mystery of the event and cause Jacob to take it to heart” (p. 306). Wessner (2000) added that the Genesis text unquestionably says that Jacob physically saw someone face to face, but that someone was neither an ordinary man nor God himself, as is often assumed, but rather a messenger acting on behalf of God. Wessner fails to consider the confession of seeing God face to face by Jacob himself. Some other scholars see the narrative as a saga hence Von Rad (1972) said, “How close our story is to all those Sagas in which gods, spirits or demons attack a man and in which then the man extorts something of their strength and their secret” (p.316). Reacting to this, Keil and Delitzsch insist that the wrestling match was physical and real, not simply spiritual hence Jacob’s real physical disability as a result of the match; however, every attempt of extremity should be avoided. This warning against extreme judgment probably accounts for the caution raised by Leupold (2005) that though the figure in the story may be described as an ‘angel’ the OT regularly refers to the Angel of the Lord when describing theophany; thus, we should not be surprised to find the second person of the Godhead himself appearing as an angel in his pre-incarnate state. Leupold’s

opinion follows the Christian ideology that the Christ was manifest even in the Old Testament.

There is a similar event in Daniel 3:25 where king Nebuchadnezzar identified the fourth person in the furnace as a son of the gods. Moreover, Von Rad later shifted opinion to the fact that the opponent appeared to be a man to Jacob, while he later reveals himself as God. Tribble (2014) observed that, the strange man cannot be all powerful if the coming of dawn restrains his physical aggression, he is not prevailing and he had to resort to obscene tactic, striking at Jacob's manhood and yet Jacob held on. The problem of the right interpretation of the theophany of Genesis 32 has remained a difficult one among OT scholars. Geller observed that there is no way for us to accurately identify the man in this passage as the author intended as the meaning in the restless activity of the mind of the text possibly answers. For Geller, the nature of the text notwithstanding the author's intention allows for all possible interpretations. Geller's opinion offers room for multiplicity and divergence of interpretations of a Biblical text. But when the mode of theological interpretation of a text is unguided, it could lead to conflict. In trying to address the problems with the already existing theories on the identity of Jacob's strange opponent the interest of scholars were aroused. Ross (1985) said, "It must be stressed that he was not wrestling with a river demon or Esau or his alter ego, but with one who was able to bless him" (p.350).

However, the narrative could most probably be a literary device to explain the religious experience which could have resulted as Jacob deeply pondered over the intricacies of his life's endeavours, besieged from one degree of struggle to another. This is possibly the reason why Wessner (1980) concludes that, "In effect, the face to face encounter serves as a supernatural stamp of approval, not a Jacob initiated victory over a local god or spirit as suggested by some" (p.350). Therefore, the classification of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as aetiology mediates the problem of both historical and literary curiosity.

The scene of the event *Peni'el* is a hybridized word 'פְּנֵה' (front, face or surface) rendered as a common noun, masculine plural (for subject-object word agreement with 'אֱלֹהִים' meaning 'God' 'god', giving rise to 'פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים' (face of God), thus: כִּי־רָאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פְּנֵים אֶל־פְּנֵים For I have seen God face to face-Gen. 32:30). This comment was inserted to reiterate the old tradition and belief around the ANE that man cannot see the face of God and still lives (Exod. 33:20). It was here that the name of the great hero of the narrative, and the bearer of the patriarchal covenant blessing was changed from Jacob יַעֲקֹב (Supplanter) to *Israel* 'who strives with God' or 'he who preserves' or in relation to the word שָׂר (Prince). The scene marked the climax of the victory of Jacob over all life struggles, including the guilt of his evil past, and the impending challenges of meeting his aggrieved brother, Esau. It may not have been a literal physical

combat since a spirit cannot be touched. It might have been a struggle between a guilty heart and a repentant spirit of which the willing soul ‘stood before’ (another word for *Penu’el*) the Ultimate reality, hence “Jacob was left alone” (Gen.35:9).

The glorious atmosphere could result in one getting suspended into the air and falling under anointing (ref. Jn.18:6) as today, which could lead to breaking of the thigh and subsequent limping. White (1988) remarked that it was a lonely, mountainous region, the haunt of wild beasts, and the lurking-place of robbers and murderers. Solitary and unprotected, Jacob bowed in deep distress upon the earth. As most twins, he could have rarely been alone in such a solitary manner, he was used to being tied up and entangled with at least one other human being at any given moment. It was midnight and all that made life dear to him were at a distance, exposed to danger and death. The bitterest side of it all was the thought of self-guilt. Willis (2014) said, “In folk tales as well as biblical stories, the moment of dawn is an important one; the time between night and day is the perfect point to signal an epic conflict and transforming event” (p. 1). It was then that with earnest cries and tears Jacob made his supplication to God. It was this mood that triggered off the religious experience at *Jabbok* and *Penu’el*. With reference to the incident, White (1988) said, “He felt that he was an outcast, and he knew that all this trouble had been brought upon him by

his own wrong course. The darkness of despair pressed upon his soul, and he hardly dared to pray” (p.135).

The crippling and the re-naming of Jacob show that God by divine purpose would have all of Jacob’s will to win, to attain and obtain, yet purged of self-sufficiency and redirect to the proper object of man’s love, God himself. If God could allow Jacob to struggle and prevail with him despite his chequered history, then people are to be encouraged to keep working hard for better opportunities ahead so they could still secure divine favour without necessarily changing their names. As Berkhof (1962) said, “In the study of the Bible, it is not sufficient that we understand the meaning of the secondary authors, we must learn to know the mind of the spirit” (p.7).

It is good to observe that the Jacobean narratives are born out of a pre-mediated intention of the author which was fused into the historical process, progress and formation of the nation of Israel, to serve as an explanation of some socio-cultural, political and religious practise that becomes part of them along the journey of becoming a people of unique nature. Murphy (2011) observed that, “There are first, individual stories which were combined in a larger complex by some unifying theme. The integration of all the complexes into final a form was a definitive theological redaction under Deuteronomistic influence” (p.4).

The Jacobean narrative was in another dimension aimed at explaining phenomenal trend like the incessant conflict between Edom and Israel as nations. It all started by domestic act of favouritism by parents which escalated and degenerated into generational conflict between two people who were blood brethren of the closet estate. Murphy rightly observed that the episode may have originally functioned as a story of shepherds prevailing over hunters. The hunter necessarily lives a more precarious and adventurous life than the shepherd. In the narrative are names coined out of incidents that took place which is an attribute of an artistic story teller. For example, river *Jabbok* though a location east of Jordan, between the Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee and probably present day *Ez-zerka* (river of blue) is from a Hebrew word ‘יַבֶּק’ (Jabbok) meaning ‘wrestle’. The wrestle here could not be referring to no other than that described in the narrative of Genesis 32 between Jacob and the strange man; therefore it is an intentional aetiology that developed overtime. Von Rad (1973) believes that, “this text developed gradually over time with many editors making modifications over the centuries” (p.319). McKenze agrees by observing that, “the pattern of the story is ancient while many of its key elements were added later” (p.226).

In placing the historical, literary and traditional concepts of the Jacobean narratives McKay in Abbott (2000) argued that the narrative may actually have been composed in the post-exilic period, using a local folktale, a section from

Jeremiah (Jer.30:1-13), and possibly the Jacob tradition from Hosea (Hos.12:2-4, 12: 3-5:13). According to her, the author created a story which, beneath the surface, deals with the tensions felt in the exilic community about the difficult journey home, fears regarding the people living there, and a desire for assurance that God would be with them.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The Old Testament biblical criticism most probably took its modern form in about 1753 with the French court physician Jean Astruc who tried to critically examine the sources of the Pentateuch under a systematic introduction to the Old Testament (1780-1783) as presented by J.G. Eichorn. It took the span of a century to analyze and exhaust theories of authorship and sources of the Old Testament. Down the historical line, Biblical criticism has remained a challenge even in the twenty first century. The interpretation of the Old Testament literature according to various literary types, genres and viewpoints create great barriers to the modern reader. Necessary steps therefore, are needed to clarify the ensuing confusions, variations, allusions, ambiguities and complexities of all kinds which are common with the rigorous processes of documentation most likely to besiege the student of the Old Testament from all sides. Biblical criticism is the application of various skills, techniques, knowledge, wisdom, and art to the corpus of Old Testament texts being

examined. Many kinds of Biblical criticisms and researches have been developed since the beginning of the Reformation (A.D. 1517).

It is only during few decades now that interdisciplinary skills, models, and techniques have become a vital part of criticism, and critical approaches to interpretation of the Bible. It is upon this platform that aetiology could be adopted by this work as a literary tool for discourse on the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. Various theories exist from various scholars and schools of thought over the literary assessment of patriarchal cum Jacobean narratives. While some hinge on various genres, others see theological themes, events or repeated forms of presentation. While we appreciate some theories and their various contributions they have made in the study of the Pentateuch in the area of Patriarchal narrative cycle, we shall adopt some of such theories according to their interconnectivity especially as it relates to the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 using aetiology as the tool for discourse. Some of such developmental theories and major approaches of interest as related to the Old Testament Patriarchal narratives emptied in Genesis 32 are: Unity of character, Standard Source, Ancestral lineage or *Toledoth* (תולדות) and Mythical Aetiology.

The theories as developed by various scholars from various places and periods will help to a great extent as tools in appreciating and weaving together of the various views and interpretations concerning the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. The discourse also helps to promote the interests for further

discovery of the fundamental beauty of the OT literature to the modern mind. This understanding will help us to identify a missing link whereby this work could be of contemporary relevance with conclusions to create more rooms for further studies. The discourse will as well be instrumental to proffering possible solutions to some socio-religious and cultural tensions which came into existence due to partial interpretation of scriptural texts at some quarters of the present Abia State and the world at large. Those groups of scholars with various fruitful approaches and theories present certain reasons behind their views. All through the Pentateuch and especially the patriarchal narratives where Genesis 32 is situate, there are evidences of regular patterns and formulae of literary presentation of characters, events, situations as well as names of persons and places. This authorial disposition raises the curiosity of critical minds on the historicity of the narratives. The critical analysis provoked by the OT style of writing gave rise to various ideas, views and theories some of which are discussed hereunder as veritable tools for the discourse of the aetiology of Genesis 32.

2.2.1 Unity of character theory

Gunkel (1997) developed the unity of character approach which tries to illustrate that the Jacobean story is built out of smaller episodes and scenes which are mostly characterised by the unity of characters, places and individual lines of tension (Jacob–Esau–Laban–sage entrance) or (Jacob–Laban–Esau

cycle of tales). The authorial cycle pattern of presentation in a regular form contributes to the curiosity surrounding the authenticity of the Pentateuch to the critical mind. From the individual characters in the Jacobean story Gunkel built two themes “Strife and Blessing” which could also be seen as “Struggle for blessing” mostly with Esau and Jacob representing Edom and Israel. Other instances of unity of character manifest in deceits or tricks and counter tricks, setting up altars at significant places for specific purposes, offences and forgiveness or reconciliation, strife and cheating, love and favouritism.

For example, Jacob tricked Esau and took his birth right; Rachael masterminded another trick on the husband Isaac to secure blessings of the father for her favourite son Jacob. Meanwhile, Isaac was set to confer the blessing on his first son Esau secretly, following tradition and contrary to the prophecy at their birth. Later on, Laban tricked Jacob over his marriage with Leah the first daughter, while Jacob tricked him over the flock. At Shechem, Levi and Simeon tricked the people into emergency circumcision and thereby avenged on them the defilement of their sister Dianah by a genocide attack. The question of how to establish the fact that Jacob really tricked Esau constitutes a major historical and literary puzzle. The use of aetiological genre as an approach to Biblical interpretation serves as a tool for reconciling curiosity and reality. Therefore, in the Old Testament the patriarchal family is used as a

platform to establish the origin of the twist on the oriental tradition of primogeniture as epitomised in the eponymous Jacob (Israel) and Esau (Edom).

The unity of character theory is simple illustration of the editors who were most interested in stating what happened and not necessarily whether it is right or wrong. The characters are typical examples of human weakness and an expression of how God is able to use whoever he wants to actualise his divine purpose despite the person. This ideology is most often typical of ‘J’ tradition where man sins and is forgiven without repentance, instead he receives blessings to move forward in life. This is evident in the character of Jacob and the narratives surrounding him which is evident in his striving and prevailing over God and as well as re-uniting with his aggrieved brother Esau as we have it in the aetiology of Genesis 32.

The unity of character approach gave rise to the development of other numerous ideologies like the basic formula or etymological aetiologies. This advanced viewpoint from Gunkel’s unity of character holds that aetiological narratives are identified by direct explanatory clauses relating to origin, and follows the same formulae or pattern subsequently. For example, when a name is given the reason for the name and the meaning follows in a sequence. Genesis 32:30 says “So Jacob called the name of the place *Penu’el* (פְּנוּאֵל) saying, “for I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved”. In Judges 6:22, 23 Gideon also made the same exclamation after he encountered an angel of God saying

“Alas, O Lord God! For now I have seen the angel of the Lord face to face. But the Lord said to him, ‘Peace be to you; do not fear, you shall not die.’” This was a bid to protect the traditional belief that no eye shall see the Lord and live among the Jews. In the case of Moses it was Yahweh who spoke with his mouth and said, “You cannot see my face; for man shall not see my face and live” (Exodus 33:20 RSV).

Therefore, anytime there is a similar encounter involving divinity and humanity the editor makes sure he squeezes in an expression after the same formula. This theory maintains that the entire patriarchal cycle including Jacobean narratives is about a repeated pattern of events deliberately put together by the author (s) to show origin. This started from the creation mythical aetiology in Genesis whereby the same formula was followed all through, hence “And God said, let there be light; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and there was evening and there was morning, one day” and so on.

The basic formula manifests also each time God revealed himself to any of the patriarchs, he will always after the same pattern reaffirm the covenant statement. Other examples are reoccurring cases of barrenness and solutions coming from divine intervention like in the cases of Sarah and Rachael. Notable as well is the practise of preferring the younger to the elder sons as the tribal leader and covenant blessing bearer like in the cases of Jacob, Joseph and

Ephraim. The basic formula holds that every aetiological narrative or expression follows the same pattern to show the handwork of same editors as the Israelites trace their national roots. Hartman (2003) comments that, many parts of Scripture abound in etiological narratives, observations, and incidental remarks of all sorts. One simple type of aetiology that is found quite often seeks to explain through popular etymology the reason why a particular person or place received such a name. Baldwin (2004) agrees with this view and comments adding that, “Jacob’s life was a story of conflicts. He always seemed to be running from someone or something: from Esau, from Laban or from famine in Canaan” (p.863). But this theory overlooks the historical significance and real implications of such events themselves which will pave room for the emergence and the development of other theories. Though we see aetiology and other literary genres in most Jacobean narratives, there is no doubt that real historical events preceded the narratives. Lindemans (1999) said:

This is not to say that etiological narratives are always completely fanciful with never a link to history or science of any kind whatsoever. It is only to say that etiological narratives, to the degree that they constitute a genre of communication, are first and foremost imaginative. To lay upon them the burden of having to be in accord with the formal disciplines of history and science is, therefore, to misidentify their primarily mytho-poetic purpose. (p. 7).

Lindemans stressed the fact that though the editors follow the same pattern in their presentation which is obvious by careful observation, it does not cast any doubt to the authenticity of their records. Gunkel (1997) pitched his opinion on the basic aspect of regular pattern of narrative presentations and along the line developed the unity of character approach.

In 1980 McKenzie, a strong proponent of basic formula from basic formula took an advanced step and came up with the standard analysis approach. According to McKenzie (1980) the Jacob cycle is the story of the perseverance and prevalence of Israel. For McKenzie, throughout the Jacobean narrative three themes predominate aside the Gunkel's basic formula and unity of character which are strife, deception and blessing. Each narrative ends with a reiteration of the promise of blessing for Jacob. This is an advancement of Gunkel's unity of character theory. But while Gunkel lays emphasis on literal characters, McKenzie looks at the narrative as primarily portraying Jacob and Esau as eponymous of nations of Israel and Edom respectively, yet all of them are based on the platform of regular format. For the standard source analysis, the Jacobean narrative is nothing else than the story of the nation of Israel. The view opines that the intention of the narrative is to aetiologically explain why the nation Israel has prevailed over all opponents, not just Edom and Aram but other surrounding nations based on the divine covenant declaration "I will bless those who bless you and him who curses you, I will curse" (Gen. 12:3).

The common feature of the above approaches that hinge around Gunkel's unity of character theory is that they are set on interconnected patterns of promoting, by implication the aetiological literary genre visible in the editorial or redactive choice of presentation of patriarchal cycle via the Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32. The theory basically emphasizes origin by direct explanation to name of a person or place before and after, the reason behind such, as well as the meaning with reoccurring cycle of narrations, will help us to explain why the Jacobean story should be seen as a deliberate editorial intention to explain Israel's past in an aetiological narrative form. All through the narrative, the same formula or pattern is consistently adopted resulting to a cycle. Coats (1983) said, "The centre of the tale is the somewhat symmetrical conversation, the conversation forms a pattern of concealing and revealing centred around the renaming of Jacob as Israel" (p.50). It is however most probable that such pattern of presentation was the one available to the editors at the time and they could hardly disguise it.

2.2.2 Ancestral lineage theory

In 2012 another strong advocate of Gunkel's unity of character and basic formula Erhard Blum advanced further to develop the ancestral lineage theory also known as *Toledoth* approach. The Ancestral lineage approach is based on the story of descent, ancestry; lineage or family tree. While Blum (2012) agrees with the basic formula theory, he advanced further to develop the *toledoth*

approach which also follows a particular formula but in another dimension. *Toledoth* simply means descent or ancestry. It is a theory based on a canonical point of view, so that in the patriarchal cycle, Jacob and Esau represent the *toledoth* of their father which began with the *toledoth* formula for Isaac in Gen.25:19 and ends with Isaac's death and burial by his two sons at *Mamre* in Gen.35:27. They are followed immediately by the *toledoth* of Esau (36:1), and then by the *toledoth* of Jacob (cf.37:2and 50:12-13) which comprises the story of Joseph and his brothers. This theory is similar to the practise of descent among Igbo people where people identity and integrity are determined by their genealogy and ancestry. This form of literary presentation is common with Old Testament writers.

Scholars like David and Pat Alexander (1992) see it as containing “a wide variety of literary materials, narratives, laws, ritual instructions, sermons, genealogies and poetry, which has been drawn together from different sources” (p.1).The chief proponent of *toledoth* theory Ernhard Blum summarises his proposition by classifying the Jacobean narratives into a tripartite structure, hence;

i) A sudden encounter by the chief protagonist (Jacob) with God Gen. 28:13&32:24; which marks major turning points in the story.

ii) Jacob and Esau in Canaan (Gen.25:19-27:1-46) Jacob's encounter with God at Bethel (28:10-22).

iii) Jacob and Leban in Aram (Gen.28:33) Jacob's encounter with God (gods, angels) at (Mahanaim Gen.32:2) and Peniel (Gen.32:24-31).

Blum backed his *toledoth* approach on the patriarchal narratives cum Jacobean story in Genesis 32 with an outstanding commentary thus:

The story has a dimension which is fundamental to all the outlined aspects of meaning when read in the perspective of the narrator and his addresses: it is part of their own collective biography from the beginning; readers know that the child described at his birth as represents Edom, and that Jacob is Israel. It is the story about the origin of peoples (גוֹיִם) and their environment. According to the genealogical conception of all groups in which social structures are based primarily on relations of kingship, history of tribes or nations begins with individual families. Thus stories of origins tell family stories which the hearers/readers see themselves in a continuity of descent. In addition, the narrated world and the addresses' world are aetiologically correlated (p.186).

Thus, the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 becomes an extension and continuation of the patriarchal family tree descending from Abraham in Genesis 12 as carefully arranged by willing crafts of editorial pen. The stamp of aetiology in Genesis 32 does not by any means erode its historical essence; it is

a part of Jewish *toledoth* background with Jacob as the chief actor. Vawter (2013) added that:

The book of Genesis is naturally divided by the *toledoth* formula which occurs 11 times throughout the book. Each of the major *toledoth* is described as the account of the father, while the son is the primary focus of the account. The life of Jacob is described throughout the account of Isaac from Gen. 25: 11-35:29, while the account of Jacob beginning in 37:2 relates the Joseph narrative to the greater Jacob narrative. These *toledoths* relate the promise of God being passed through the younger son rather than the elder, and the Jacob account shows further that God's plan will not be frustrated even by the weakness of the one through whom God has chosen to work (p.4).

God is seen in the picture as the independent author, sustainer and finisher of the history of man. When God is carrying out his divine purpose he deploys every available human agent despite tradition, but he has to start with somebody; this is what the OT editors did using aetiology from the point of view of the *toledoth* approach. This approach is relevant in this study because both Jews and Igbo people of Abia state do not joke with their ancestral history. Maduabum (2012) said, "Igbo names also reflect joy, sorrow, death, prospects and potentials" (p.11). This is why it is a worrisome situation when names of persons and communities are arbitrarily changed. Both in the OT Hebrew *toledoth* and Igbo cultures, a person's name serves as an authentication of his

membership of a family. Ezekwu (2014) said, “With the names, the child is initiated into the culture of his or her people. He or she is now recognised and affirmed as a member of the family and community; this also confirms him or her as a member of the entire clan” (p.22). The Jews of Jacob’s time and up till date and Igbo people use names as forms of identity like every other people, but beyond that a name serves as source of history, discernment of destiny and assessment of character. Ezekwu even added that Igbo world values and understanding of life itself is reflected in the names they bear which represents their historical past, hence; “The Igbo name is highly informative such that one could easily see through the names, a reflection of one’s belief or opinion on life and reality. The Igbo names actually serve both as windows or mirrors through which one could look into the Igbo world values as well as their way of dealing without understanding life” (p.3). In the aetiological narrative of Genesis 32 however, the name ‘Jacob’ is the major character whose *toledot* is traced to Abraham and of course to Adam who were known for their strength and failures in their journey with Yahweh. Precisely Cotterell (1989) said,

The Jacob discourse, which occupies some twenty-five chapters of Genesis, provides an indicative model to illustrate the point. It is itself set the larger of Genesis and the larger pentateuchal text. It is preceded by the creation discourse which acts as stage, as that part of the text that states the issue addressed by the text as a whole, and

then by the Abraham narrative. Genesis 25:19 economically concludes the Abraham discourse and opens the new Jacob discourse. These first twenty-five chapters are given coherence through the formulaic *toledot*. These formulae may be anaphoric, but may also be cataphoric, with the distinction determined by the co-text. The Jacob discourse itself is introduced by the generations' statement at Genesis 25:19, and is punctuated by the Esau genealogy of chapter 36, itself introduced by the *toledot* formula at 36:1. (p. 151).

There is a visible literary coherent discourse from Genesis 25-50, there is then the need for form-critical interpretation and analytical illustration of texts through the Jacob discourse.

2.2.3 Mythical Aetiology theory

Mythical aetiology theory was developed by B.S. Childs. For Childs (2000), history asks when? Myth asks who? But aetiology asks why and how? But when a narrative contains 'who' and 'how' it encompasses both myth and aetiology, and could be safely referred to as "mythical aetiology" or "aetiological myth". Childs sees aetiological myths as those stories common in mythological explanations for peculiar things in nature or certain events, and events and customs of which the origin has long been forgotten. Such myths are

punitive stories about the origin of things symbolic and often anthropomorphic explanations of some aspects of the natural world that could not be scientifically verified. Myths are interested in understanding the inner meaning of what happened and what the purpose is behind the tale and mostly as it concerns divine beings in relation with human beings (world). The theophanies at Bethel in Genesis 28 and Jabbok as contained in the Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 are examples of mythical aetiology. They all contain stories of events and interactions between divinity and humanity יהוה (Yahweh) and יַעֲקֹב (Jacob).

The incident at Bethel traces the origin of the divine affirmation of the number three historical figure in the patriarchal lineage headship called ‘Jacob’ (יַעֲקֹב) as the covenant bearer and channel of divine blessing. The encounter was entirely divinely initiated, despite the evil past of the narrative protagonist. In the same vein, the theophany at Jabbok is an effort to give the name ‘Israel’ (יִשְׂרָאֵל) a historical footing. The events are none the least real and factual chronological records of past events as some modern preachers interpret them to be. The degree of acceptability of myth as authentic history of Israel traceable to the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 gave rise to the development of other ideologies like the historical worth evaluation.

The historical worth evaluation proposes that since aetiology has to do with the past, it should therefore contain elements of history. This idea poses two questions to appropriate elements of history to its credit, thus: what are the

marks of aetiology in the narratives? And, how is a given aetiological narrative related to real history? The questions are pointed in the Jacobean story when for instance it is said, “Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh because he touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh on the sinew of the hip” (Gen.32:32).

A similar indication is seen where it is written, “And Jacob set up a pillar upon her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel’s tomb which is here to this day” (Gen.35:20). Since aetiology is a tale based on causation and origination, the former example tends to answer the question of how and why an Israelite is prohibited from eating a particular part of the meat, while the later tried to answer the question over the pillar on the spot where Rachael’s grave stood. The history and origin of a people, whether socio-cultural or religious are mingled with their aetiological tales; this is evident about Israel in Genesis 32. Each of the two instances however, contains some elements of historical past which is the emphasis of the historical worth ideology. Some scholars identify such historical elements as ‘sacred history’. Woudstra (1970) said, “Orthodox Biblical scholarship has not been unmindful of the fact that the events of sacred history are reported to us in the Bible within a certain interpretive context, a context which lets the full light of God’s revelation fall upon the event” (p.55).

The limitations of this theory is that though it emphasises past event, once it is aetiology it has come short of that which history is known for, and that is facts

and figures. The story in aetiology could be a fiction, myth or folktale leaving the reader with only a clue to explain the origin of a phenomenon.

Most Old Testament narratives are best approached with religious periscope, and religious matters are subjective. For example, the events at *Bethel* and *Jabbok* as contained in the Jacobean narratives are neither scientifically nor historically verifiable, yet they are not factually deniable as matters of faith. McKay (1987) comments that while it is important and interesting to consider the kinds of historical context that may lie behind this story, it is also important not to make sweeping statements about the historical background of the text as there is very little that we know for sure about it.

Therefore, for the purposes of this work we shall adopt Gunkel's unity of character, Blum's ancestral lineage and Child's mythological theories as major working ideologies. Slight references will be made to the rest of the aforementioned approaches in the discourse of the aetiology of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. These theories will help us to appreciate the literary aetiological colouration of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32, as well as recognise the fact that the story of origins thrives and derives authenticity from both historical monuments and mythological backdrops.

2.3 Empirical Studies

This empirical discourse will include the hermeneutical interpretation of the Jacobean narrative based on the historical and literary analysis, and the social-cultural implications of interpreting the aetiology of the origin of the name 'Israel' in Genesis 32. Old Testament narratives are collections of traditions preserved in Judah and Israel over their ancestral past. These traditions existed first as oral tales transmitted from one generation to another. They were telling and retelling them with necessary embellishments to suit each era of believing community. Along the process, the life and identity of the nation got mingled in the tales thereby forming and establishing traditions. The devastation that accompanied the exile to Babylon (586 B.C.) with the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, coupled with the discovery of the scroll in the Temple triggered off Josiah's reform made the documentation of those traditions inevitable. It is against this backdrop that every interpretation of scriptural text is assessed.

The present day claim by some Christian preachers that for one to prosper, he must change to a new name especially if it is either a native name or names like Jacob following the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is a social problem. Traditionally, names are believed to exert one influence or the other on their bearers, yet the belief could still be said to be subjective because it is empirically verifiable. People also bear good and wonderful names; yet make a

shipwreck of life. Originally the overall message of the scripture was the traditional concern of readers for devotional purpose before the upsurge of various critical approaches and methods of studying biblical texts. The critical studies rose from historical criticism, source criticism, textual criticism, form criticism and redaction criticism to mention but a few. The effort is to proffer some more reasonable standard of interpreting scriptural texts to avoid wild deviations from the status quo.

Historical criticism which took a foothold in the 17th century gave rise to textual criticism and describes the later works of scholars like Jean Astruc, Julius Wellhausen et al. It is a branch of literary criticism that considers the background of ancient texts to ascertain the original meaning and literal sense (*Literalis historica*). It seeks to reconstruct the historical situation of the author and the recipients which incorporates the origin, the literary and historical genre where the text belongs. It also considers the location, events and customs surrounding the emergence of such a text. The OT Jacobean narratives are one of those tales that were necessitated by the quest to explain the origin of certain customs among the people of Israel. Philip Davies opines that after the destruction of the northern kingdom Judah retained parts, at least, of the territory of Benjamin and incorporated some traditions into the national epic for preservation. There is also a developing consensus among scholars that it was not until the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah (727-698) or later that materials

began to be collected and put together with the intention of creating a national epic.

Historically, the Jews are the people God, chosen and ordained. The history of the Old Testament is rather a complex and complicated one when it comes to the modern and scientific definition of history. This among other reasons is because the authors and editors were guided by their theological interest. Okwueze (2008) said, “the sacredness of the book is an obstacle to its historical value as its scriptural status in living to make critical examination and analysis difficult for both Jew and Christian , and may actually prevent it altogether for some students” (p.1). In order to understand the OT, knowledge of the history behind it is a prerequisite without which the ensuing texts are bound to be misinterpreted as well as misapplied, and could result to interpretive abuse that leads to social disharmony.

Old Testament records are not primarily meant to provide information about political, military, social and economic developments. They were recorded to interpret the historical root of Israel’s life in terms of the divine purpose; to describe important religious developments and drive home religious lessons. By raising critical questions, some basic truths about the sketchy historical records of the OT were discovered. Theological questions are common with analytical study of Biblical literature. The literary study of component parts hovers around origin, composition, preservation, transmission,

translation et cetera. The emergence of historical and literary criticisms of the OT revealed the organic relationship between the history of Israel and its literature. Okwueze concluded that the OT in form and content bears the unmistakable stamp of circumstantialities of history. For him, it is not sufficient merely to read the Old Testament if one wishes to understand the full significance of its narratives. Literary questions must be raised and duly addressed. For example, was there more than one author? In what form did he or they express himself (themselves)? Where did he get his materials? To whom or for who did he write? When did he write? In the light of all these conditions and factors, what is the meaning and importance of his words? The efforts made in the answering of such questions will give an unquantifiable advantage in the proper understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament. The whole aim of Biblical criticism is to discover the meaning and significance of the Old Testament canonical texts for the purpose of providing authoritative and normative guidance for the people of God in the world today.

Many Old Testament scholars hold that the Pentateuch was composed of four major documents (J.E.D.P.) stemming from different times, places and persons (or groups), and vastly different styles, meaning and purpose as developed by Wellhausen. This theory has faced series of critical attacks at the end of the 20th century, yet conservative scholarship has resisted any form of theory that tends to reduce the veracity, authority, inspiration, or revelatory

character of the Old Testament writings. Literary criticism today is understood as the application to the OT according to the canons of literary criticism used to investigate literature of any kind. Poetics, which is the study of the use of language and style to obtain meaning, has helped to re-establish the unity, the beauty, the integrity, the quality, the meaning and significance of OT literature. Many other subcategories of literary criticism also exist, like rhetorical criticism; which is an examination through the use of language and literary stylistics of how the author(s) has established materials together (edited them) to establish meaning and significance.

Another tool is linguistics, which is the formal scientific study of human language involving the application of some aspects by modern linguistics to the task of biblical exegesis to discover meaning. Structuralism is another subcategory of literary criticism which attempts to discover the underlying deep patterns (conventions) of universal meaning and significance in Biblical texts. The reader response criticism is another tool which is a focus on the perspective of the readers and how they create meaning and significance from the text. A new approach seems to come to light nearly each year. Form criticism is a tool which originally sought to establish fixed literary patterns (usually small sections), and then to use these patterns to go behind the present text to help establish the meaning and significance of the literary pattern in its current context.

The Hebrews outlived defeat, captivity and the loss of their national independence largely because they possessed writings that preserved their history and traditions. Many Jews did not return to Palestine after the exile, those who returned did so to rebuild the Temple and reconstruct a society that was more nearly a religious community than an independent nation. The Religion found expression in the books of the Old Testament (books of the Law ‘Torah’), history, prophesy and poetry. With passage of time, these traditions so collected and documented became a source of interest. Some consulted it for religious reasons, while others appreciated it either for reasons of literature or history. It is obvious that the Old Testament is the religious book for both Jews and Christians. It is also clear that when it comes to the modern scientific way of assessing historical texts, the Bible cannot be reckoned as a historical piece despite so many elements of history contained in it. The theological interest of Israel as a chosen people intended by OT authors and editors overlaps its historicity.

Most often than not, aetiologies in the *‘TaNaK’* correspond to a negative evaluation, for this reason, many people throughout the ages have read the story of Genesis 3 as a justification for why women must be subordinated to men. This precisely is why the modern thinker would insist that while aetiologies provide explanations for the causes and origins of a social attitude, they should not be read as prescriptions for how the world ought to be. Furthermore, many

of these prescriptions characterize a world as it ought not to be. Aetiological explanations have their limitations though, especially when ethical issues are involved. The ethical dimension of aetiology does not prevent a person or a community from critically re-examining the basis of the aetiological explanations.

A society's formational aetiological explanations when left unanalysed can become a source for social dysfunction. A contemporary behaviour ought to take aetiological explanations of any practise and hold them to ethical scrutiny. Biblical narratives convey lessons for either emulation or admonition. The lessons are derivable from a conscious scrutiny of texts both as individual part and or as part of a whole passage. This is most common in the Pentateuch, and particularly in the Patriarchal narratives. The Jacobean story is a narrative within the corpus of the patriarchal cycle. Hence, the journey that started from Mesopotamia with Abraham also took the grandson Jacob to Haran from where he finally journeyed to the promise land (Canaan) and ended using Egypt as a landmark passage. Narrative cycle is a common feature of the Pentateuch literature. In the field of literature, a narrative is said to be aetiological when it attempts to explain the origins of some structural phenomena, customs and cultural practices. Coogan (2012) said,

It may be taken, then, as a substantial hypothesis that the Jacobean narratives and perhaps the biblical narratives of similar form are to

be understood as literary fictions, not only in the primary construction of the individual narrative segments but in the development of the larger complex tales of the patriarchal tradition. Those historiography elements that occur in the narratives and in their transmission and development are similarly constructed on this essentially fictional literary basis. (p. 65).

The emphasis here is on the need to scrutinize Biblical texts by means of literary critical tools and methods. This will help to place the texts in their appropriate literary genres in order to enhance proper interpretation and subsequent applications, thereby checking abuse. This work adopted aetiological discourse as an approach for scrutinizing the Jacobean narrative as contained in Genesis 32. Literary approach to interpreting scripture is a lot of aid for understanding both the intention behind the text and the best channel of application. Schrein (2007) affirms that,

Understanding the type of literature that you are reading is essential to grasping the author's intention. Understanding the genres, literary forms, and literary techniques used by the biblical authors will be helpful for interpreting the deeper meaning of the Scriptures (p.1).

Narratives form the most common genre in the Old Testament. It has about forty per cent of the Old Testament records. Narratives are works that provide an account of connected events. There are literary techniques contained in the Old Testament narratives. The techniques help the reader to use imagination by

the aid of past experience to derive meaning and visualize situations which the text expresses.

Some narrative types used by Biblical editors within the Pentateuch are fiction, aetiology and theophany. Theophany could be defined as the physical manifestation of God (a god) to a person. Customarily, human eyes cannot see God who is a Spirit, just like the wind is not seen with human eyes; but God can choose to reveal to man in theophanies certain things. This is what happened in the Jacobean encounter at Penu'el (Gen.32:22-32) where he was said to have wrestled with an unknown figure. Most of the Old Testament characters are far from perfect and their actions also. The narrators' choice of characters and images are selective and incomplete. Not all the relevant details are always given. What does appear in the narrative is everything that the inspired author thought important for his anticipated audience.

Most often the ethical justification of a narrative is left to the judgement of the reader. It is however, important to recognize the larger context into which the narrative fits, and to ask why the writer used the specific selection of events in the precise sequence in which he placed them. Corpus of the Old Testament texts is being considered for proper interpretation of the meaning, for rightful application in the present society. In his Doctorate degree Dissertation, Paris (2012) observed that relatively recent method of narrative criticism marks a new journey in the field of biblical studies, an expectation that diverges in many

different directions as it explores new strategies in an attempt to lead scholarship beyond historical concerns. One of the resulting directions is the literary consideration of Jacobean narrative by aetiological appraisal. Narrative criticism admits the existence of sources and redactions, but chooses to focus on the critical weaving of these materials into a sustained narrative picture. In a footnote comment Paris said that he leaves open the possibility for further interpretations. This work is one of those possibilities, and it takes the possibility towards the direction of the Old Testament Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 by etiological discourse. Curtis (1987) said, “A careful study of much of the Biblical narrative material makes it clear that there are many indications of literary sophistication throughout that material as well” (p.129). This sophistication offers leverage for various and varying interpretations of a text, however, it has to be within a framework.

In most OT narratives are evidences of mind dribbling literary expressions. For example, the name ‘Jacob’ in Hebrew sounds like the noun for ‘heel’, and like the verb for ‘holding’ or ‘taking’ by the heel or ‘supplanting’. Because the root indicates advance or assailing from the rear by stealth, Jacob is portrayed throughout the stories about him as a trickster who gains by deceit. Hence in the stories about his birth, Jacob comes into the world grasping his brother’s heel, and he later supplants his brother in the role of oldest son by acquiring first his birthright and then his blessing by deception. Esau is

described as red and hairy because the Hebrew word for ‘red’ *admoni* (אֲדָמוֹנִי) resemble ‘Edom’ and the word for ‘hair’ *se’ir* (שַׁעִיר) sounds like *se’ir* another name for ‘Edom’. For sure many scriptural texts especially in the Pentateuch abound in etiological narratives; it is all about literature in outlook. Good (1981) said, “The Bible is literature, whatever else it may be” (p.30). Sometimes the author or editors exercise the freedom of assigning a normative identity to a historical figure or a geographical location in order to promote and protect certain interests. This development could affect the understanding and interpretation of such texts in later times and distant places, like in the cases where some modern preachers interpret the Genesis 32 in the light of success in life based on change of name. While an individual has the right to change his name for whatever reasons; a family, village or community name should not be changed based on unguided interpretation of Scripture.

2.4 Summary of Review

This chapter discusses works, views and literatures already in existence pertaining to the Old Testament Jacobean narrative cycle as aetiology. The work classified the existing literature into three subsections. The three subsections are Conceptual Framework; Theoretical Framework and Empirical Studies. The Conceptual framework looked into the key terms in the topic and conceptualised them according to their relevance in the body of the work. Scholars like Yancey, Hinson and Tenney were cited as agreeing that the Old

Testament remains relevant whether in the bible times, the milieu of its development and production, the New Testament Era, as well as in the present socio-religious, economic and cultural contemporary dispensation. Other scholars like David & Pat Alexander (1992) opine that the Old Testament contains a wide range of literary materials including narratives like Jacobean story and those texts are not without some editorial interests, intentions and purposes. Frethein and Coogan posit that though the Jacobean cycle is aetiology, yet its authenticity is retained. While Okwesili agrees with this view, he channels his view more towards McKenzie's Standard Source theory which holds the story of Esau and Jacob in the cycle as eponymous of the nations of Edom and Israel in their constant and continual generational conflicts and struggles.

The Theoretical framework discussed development overtime cycle of themes surrounding the Old Testament Jacobean narratives. Scholars like Fletcher and Baldwin agree on the view of Basic formula. Alt sees it from Historical worth; Blum approaches it from Descent (Toledoth) point of view, while Gunkel illustrates the cycle under Unity of Character, Mary Anne comments that Patriarchal narrative hovers around three figures, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph. However, other scholars like Childs see the narrative as Mythical Aetiology. McKenzie and his group assess the cycle under Standard Source Analysis theory. The third subdivision is the Empirical Framework

which discussed the history of Biblical criticism, interpretation and application. Scholars like Astru, Wellhausen, Okwueze et al agree that the Bible is a literature situated and developed within a geographical milieu which needs interpretation to enhance relevance in the future and distant worlds of meaning. The interpretation needs a pattern of approach or tools (criticism) to ensure consistency, uniformity and proper guidance. They also agree that as the writer enjoyed his freedom of documenting and editing, so does the reader and the interpreter of all ages.

This work discovers that the Old Testament Jacobean story is a narrative form of a literature; and a cycle due to replicated events within the corpus, as well as aetiology by virtue of trying to explain certain phenomena like constant conflict between the people of Edom and Israel, Jewish dietary law and the origin of 'Israel' as a name changed from Jacob. This work agrees with various scholarly views that the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is an aetiological masterpiece. The modern day literal interpretation of the change of name from Jacob to Israel as a condition for material and spiritual prosperity particularly in Abia state has not received adequate scholarly attention or consensus. This is the missing gap which the work intends to fill.

CHAPTER THREE

EXEGESIS OF GENESIS 32

Jacob's encounter with the strange man at *Jabbok/Penu'el* (Gen.32:22-32) remains very strategic and pivotal to the Jacobean aetiological narrative and deserves a close study. As Berkhorf (2015) said,

The study of Hermeneutics is very important for future ministers of the Gospel, because the intelligent study of the Bible only will furnish them with the material which they need for the construction of their theology. Every sermon they preach ought to rest on a solid exegetical foundation; this is one of the greatest desiderata of the present day (p.12).

This is what this chapter sets out to do using literary and discourse analysis to examine the theological relevance of the narrative. This will be approached under three sub divisions comprising of exegetical discourse and analysis of Genesis 32:22-32; literary analysis of aetiology in Genesis 32; Aetiology and Patriarchal theology in Genesis 32 narrative, and Editorial-word and name-play in Genesis 32 and patriarchal narratives. Jacob was a major patriarch in the OT history and for this reason; constant references will be made to patriarchal narratives of which the Jacobean aetiological narrative in Genesis 32 exists as a unit.

3.1 A literary discourse of Genesis 32

This chapter serves as a bridge between Jacob's separation from Laban his maternal uncle and host in his land of refuge, and reconciliation with his aggrieved brother Esau. To derive the meaning and relevance of this aetiological narrative, the use of discourse as a tool is inevitable especially as a unit of the corpus of the patriarchal narratives of the Pentateuch. Cotterell (1989) said,

The term discourse meaning is particularly important. On the one hand, we seek to avoid the notion of the semantic autonomy of the text. A text cannot carry any meaning, but it does carry a meaning intended by the original speaker or author, related to the context within which it was generated and the co-text of which it is a part. On the other hand, we avoid also the complete relativity of meaning inevitable when meaning is no more than that meaning perceived by the reader, however much that meaning might appear to others to be inimical to the objective text. In appointing a text, then, we are searching first for the discourse meaning and not for the significance of the text for us. It is certainly true that in some instances we may be forever unsure of what the intended meaning was, and we may have to admit to the possibility of several distinct meanings. But it must be emphasized that the range of possible meanings is not infinite: Uriah was dead, not attending a banquet in Jerusalem (p. 141).

It is indeed the safest thing to do in Biblical interpretation to consider the primary intention of the text as well as its contemporary significance and not just the later as observed among modern preachers and specifically in Abia state-Nigeria. The consistency in the pattern of literary presentation in the OT narratives is ever loud. Klein (1993) said, "The intended meaning of any passage is the meaning that is consistent with the sense of the literary context in

which it occurs” (p.157). Literary narrative genres like Genesis 32 aetiology carry significant history that requires nuanced interpretation.

3.1.1 Jacob prepares to meet Esau

While Laban went his way Jacob also moved on, and immediately encountered ‘angels of God’ (מַלְאָכֵי אֱלֹהִים) which could also be translated as ‘Messengers of God’. This event is parallel to the event of Genesis 28 where Jacob saw angels ascending and descending a ladder (סֻלָּם). This is a typical example of B.S. Child’s mythical aetiological theory whereby a narrative attempts to explain an origin of something by deploying literary features of a myth. There is a careful editorial swing here, as Jacob immediately identifies and describes the scenario as ‘God’s army’, Hebrew (מַחֲנֵה אֱלֹהִים) also translated as ‘God’s camp’. This narrative is an aetiological explanation of the origin of a place at the eastern side of Jordan, called *Mahanaim* (מַחֲנַיִם) which literarily means ‘two camps’. The authorial use of ‘two’ (שְׁנַיִם) here might be referring to Laban and Jacob, God and Jacob or Esau and Jacob; but one obvious thing in the narrative is the continual word-play on ‘two’ by the author, including Jacob dividing his family and flocks into ‘two companies’ in verse 7, as well as the reference to ‘two wives and two maids’ (Hebrew אֶת־שְׁתֵּי נַשְׂוֹתַי וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי שְׂפֹחֹתַי) in verse 22. Flichter’s basic formula and McKenzie’s standard analysis theories are evident in this scene when an addendum tends to explain the origin of something, hence, ‘so he called the name of that place Mahanaim’ (Gen.32:2), translated from Hebrew וַיִּקְרָה שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מַחֲנַיִם.

In verse 4, there is a careful indication of geographical location by placing Esau as a dweller in the Se'ir (שְׁעִיר) in the hill country of Edom (אֶדוֹם) which carries an element of history in consonance with historical evaluation theory of Albert Alt. The idea of Jacob sending messengers to Esau shows that it takes a mediator to establish reconciliation. Again, Jacob addresses his brother as lord (אֲדֹנָי) which is a sign of humility showing the best approach to peaceful relationship. Jacob recounted his journey to Haran and the wealth he acquired there not just out of pride but out of willingness to share with his brother, and more so to demonstrate that he was not selfish in his peace move. In agreement to this view Murphy & Carm (2011) said, “The reference to his sojourn with Laban may be merely informative, but the statement about his own affluence is meant to communicate something to Esau, and that is the willingness to share or yield to Esau the family inheritance” (p. 33).

The information from Jacob's embassy sent to his brother caused him fear and distress, Hebrew יָרָה which could also be translated as ‘to terrify’, led to his strategising in Semitic style to protect his hard earned possessions as well as Hebrew ‘abundance’ מְאֹד. The intention of Esau coming with four hundred men is almost left to the imagination of the reader, which is a common feature of OT aetiologies. However, Jacob's reaction to the news creates a sense of danger. Jacob acted as a human being, judging from the severed relationship between him and Jacob, and the mention of four hundred men who might be a

band of army. Jacob was only sure that there were no warriors among his own entourage. The sound of ‘and four hundred men with him’ rendered in Hebrew as *וְאַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת עִמּוֹ*, sent a danger signal down the spines of Jacob, the protagonist and schemer, who must do something as usual for self and protection.

However, in addition to the protective measure of dividing his family and flocks into two, Jacob recognized his inabilities for the first time, and acknowledging the ability of Yahweh to bring his promise to fulfilment. The author deliberately used this aetiological narrative to inform Israel that there is an extent to which human wisdom and mastery could enable a man to prevail. The people of God should know that every success they think they ever achieved was only a fulfilment of covenant promise of Yahweh to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. If Jacob had realised this earlier in life, he would have avoided a lot of troubles. The editorial intention in the aetiological narrative here is to prove the fact that God would have in his own divine way and manner made ‘the younger to serve the elder’ without Jacob cheating his brother Esau and moving into voluntary exile.

3.1.2 Jacob prepares to meet God

There is a deliberate editorial arrangement here in verse 9 to prepare Jacob, the hero of Genesis 32 narrative aetiology which culminated at *Penu'el* from verse 32. Jacob had to invoke the God of his fathers, *אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתָיו* Abraham and Isaac for the first time. The author might not have taken

cognisance of the fact that there has not actually been any hint whereby the reader was meant to see Jacob reconciling with God. The only indication in chapter 28 was a mere acknowledgment that he was met by God, but that was without any direct response by Jacob. However, Hebrew literature has the tendency of hurrying to the end of the narrative. Moreover, if the authors ever envisaged that their work would have attracted a global scrutiny in multiples of centuries later, certainly some things would have been done, but they were just a simple group doing their simple thing. Jacob's prayer and supplication from verses 9 to 12 is a sign of humility, submission, motivation, vertical reconciliation with Yahweh and more so, a show of helpless the estate of man in certain circumstances of life. Murphy & Carm (2011) sums it all by saying that, "His avowal of unworthiness serves also as a motif in praise of the Lord's generosity" (p.33).

3.1.3 Penu'el (פְּנּוּאֵל) encounter in Genesis 32:22-32

In *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, the 4th edition there are 33 verses in Genesis chapter 32, but in the other translations like RSV and NRSV there are only 22. A closer look revealed that the Bible Works which we used has last verse of chapter 31:55 as verse one in chapter 32. This is why verse one in the translations we used in this exegesis like the RSV will be corresponding to verse two in the Hebrew Bible works. Kohlenberger (1987) on a footnote said, "The Hebrew numeration of chapter 32 begins with verse

55 of chapter 31 in English: thus, there is a one verse discrepancy throughout chapter 32” (p.87).

Genesis 32:22 mention וַיִּקָּם —This is a combination of the particle conjunction ו which is translated as ‘and, so, their, now, or but’ and קָם meaning ‘to arise or stand’. When rendered in the *qal* it means ‘to confirm’, while the *piel* is translated as ‘to rise up’ and *hiph* means ‘to be raised’. Therefore, the combination of ו and קָם is translated as “now he got up” or “and he arose” which serves as switch over from the narrative of Jacob’s preparation to meet Esau to setting the scene for *Jabbok* encounter. The Hebrew $\text{בַּלַּיְלָה$ is a combination of three words, the particle preposition ב meaning ‘in, at, or by; the article ה meaning ‘the’ and לַיְלָה a singular common absolute noun translated in English as ‘knight’. The translation of the above three Hebrew words are translated as “And he got up in the night”. The question is who got up in the night? Which night? The answers are found in Genesis 32:1, 21. He is ‘Jacob’ son of Isaac, in the same ‘night’ he met angels of God on his way after which he made his first confessional prayers ever and sent his household in three batches to meet Esau on his way back to Canaan. It was the same night he had the religious experience (Theophany) at *Jabbok* (יַבֹּק). The independent pronoun הוּא in verse 22 translated as ‘he or himself’ confirms that Jacob was the person referred to by the narrator.

The Hebrew *וְאֶת־שְׁתֵּי שְׂפָחוֹתָיו* transliterated as ‘and two maidservants of him’ is translated by RSV as “his two maids” could also be translated as “his two concubines”. The *NIV Thematic Reference Bible* defines concubine as a woman, often a servant or slave, with whom a man had regular sexual relations, but to whom he was not married. A concubine did not have the right of a wife and her children were not rightful heirs, though a wife might offer a servant to her husband as a concubine to have children on her behalf. In Old Testament times, concubines were allowed alongside wives in a polygamous society. Kirkpatrick (2007) defines concubine as a woman who lives with a man but is not his wife or a second wife in a polygamous society. The Jews borrowed this practice from neighbouring nations like *Nuzi*. About twenty thousand *Akkadian* documents were discovered in *Nuzi* which was a town located in the northeast of the Fertile Crescent which was named *Gasur*. *Nuzi* tablets are popular for the records of socio-economic and legal codes and regulations of Mesopotamian culture ca. 2000-1400 B.C. Within this period some parallel cultures mostly marriage customs are cited. Fredrick (2004) said, “In the case of infertility, both Rachael and Leah offered their maids as surrogate mates that would bear sons to their husband Jacob, a custom seen also at Nuzi”. In Genesis 16:3; 25:1 such practice is recorded concerning Abraham with Hagar and Keturah.

Since the Hebrew word for concubine (*פִּילְגָשׁ*) is not found in Genesis 32 but in 36:12, we could presume therefore that the translation of wife is an idea

borrowed from Israelite neighbours by taking a maid as wife but not of equal status with the legitimate wife as she could be dismissed at will like in the case of Sarai and Hagar. Suffice it to say that the Hebrew אִשָּׁה translated as ‘woman’ or ‘wife’ or just ‘female’ and פִּילְגָנִישׁ as concubine has the former as dependent and the later independent concubines. Another disparity is יָאֵת־אָחָר עֶשְׂרִי meaning ‘and one ten sons of him’ which the New International Version (NIV) translates as “and eleven sons”. The RSV renders it as “and his eleven children”. At this point in history, the last son of Jacob (Benjamin; Gen.35:17-19) was not yet born. Should we include Dinah (30:21), then the number of children will be twelve. Suffice it then to say that NIV’s “eleven sons” and RSV’s “eleven children” are referring to the eleven sons excluding the daughter hence Jews do not include women in official census. The Hebrew word יָלָד (child, son, boy, or youth) is rendered as a plural 3rd person’s common masculine noun.

Another word creation of the editor is the location identified as יַבֵּק (Jabbok) which is a proper noun without number, gender or state. This is description of a place near river Jordan otherwise rendered as יַבֵּק מַעְבַּר (ford or pass of Jabbok) which is the present day *Wadi Zerqa* with water flowing west into the Jordan about twenty miles north of the Dead Sea. As a word *Jabbok* on its own means ‘Flowing’ which indicates that the name was probably assigned by the narrator to describe the imagery he tried to create in his story.

Verse 24 is another verse of interest especially the Hebrew וַיִּתְּרַן a combination of וְ (and, so, then, when, now, but or that) and יָתַר verb (niph'al) imperfect 3rd person's masculine singular, meaning "to be left" (hiphal) "to leave or spare" literally translated "So he was alone". The person alone here was Jacob by himself לְבַדּוֹ יַעֲקֹב. What did Jacob do while alone? וַיִּצְרַח (and he wrestled with him, a man). How long was the combat? עַד־לְבֹקֶרֶת (until, to come, the dawn). Since the Hebrew word לְבַדּוֹ is a combination of לְ a particle preposition (to, for, in etc.) and בָּד common noun, masculine singular construct 3rd person's suffix, meaning 'separation', 'empty' or 'idle talk'; and the Hebrew word יָצַח could be translated as 'man' or 'person' or 'mankind'. It is possible that Jacob was having a personal meditation all night (idle talk or soliloquizing) which could have resulted to a religious experience, having been all alone in such state of mind and serene environment attended with fresh cool breeze of the night from the river.

After all in Genesis 32:1 when he was met with angels of God the narrator stated it vividly. More so the Hebrew יָצַח here does not indicate divinity. In chapter 28:13ff, God spoke to Jacob directly and it is not in doubt. In Genesis 35:9ff, God is shown to pronounce Jacob as 'Israel', if it is not a report from a different editor, then the duplication would have been unnecessary after the event of 32:24 except it represents the Jewish literary style of using doublets as a matter of emphasis of confirmation of an idea.

In verse 25 the strange man saw that he could not prevail against Jacob and changed or beefed up his tactics dislocating his hip thus: **יָרְכוּ וַתִּקַּע-בְּכַף וַיִּגַע** (then he touched, on socket of, hip of him, so she was wrenched). Here, the verb **יָרְעַ** meaning ‘to dislocate’ or ‘to hang’ is a feminine 3rd person’s qal imperfect singular verb which could be rendered as “he was wrenched”. The action was quickly taken because the day was fast breaking **הַשָּׁחַר עָלָהּ כִּי** (it came, the dawn). This experience could have been born out of burden of past reproach and present burden on the platform of conscience battle between good and evil in the atmospheric presence of the righteous God (of his fathers) invoked after the confessional prayer in verse 9ff. Job (27:6) said, “I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live”.

The Hebrew word translated as conscience here is **לִבְבִי** meaning ‘inner man’, ‘mind’, ‘will or heart’. In this event Jacob would have wrestled or battled with (in) himself (inner man) over his evil past, the impending danger of meeting his aggrieved brother Esau and his present standing with Yahweh who had chosen him as a bearer and passage for the patriarchal covenant blessing. After all, who can battle with the Lord? Hence, the battle is the Lord’s (1Sam.17:47).

In verse 27 the strange man asked Jacob, “What is your name”? And he said, ‘Jacob’. This is probably a simple reminder of an old and sinful life history

on personal assessment of what one got himself into by mere display of passionate ambition which is no longer a fashionable way of life. Jacob had to reply and further asked the man his own name, but he declined from disclosing his identity. God has always cherished revealing himself to his people. In Genesis 28: 13 he already revealed himself to Jacob as the God of his father Abraham and Isaac. In Exodus 3:13-14 Moses asked his name which he answered as “I AM WHO I AM” אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה. In the New Testament (Acts 9:5) when Saul asked him, “who are you Lord”? There was no hint of any hesitation but a vivid reply, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting”. So, the reason why God will choose to be anonymous in the Jabbok episode of the Jacobean narrative is yet to be unraveled. Even the new name, אֱלֹהִים (a proper noun without gender, state or number) simply interpreted as “God strives” is a clear indication it was Jacob striving with God, probably in the realm of his conscience. In verse 30 Jacob proclaimed (אָרָא) “I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved” is an indication of an editorial channel of expression in order to emphasize the ancient notion that nobody sees God and lives as God told Moses (Exodus 32:20). It could also be an editorial arrangement to solve the puzzle over the identity of the strange combatant man.

The point is that such religious experience by Jacob often involves God (Spirit) and it was only Jacob’s expression in verse 30 (his personal opinion) that many assume that the anonymous man was God. Moreover, the identity of

the location *Penu'el* (פְּנוּאֵל) is hereby assigned aetiological historical signature. In verse 31 'the sun rose upon him' וַיִּזְרַח־לּוֹ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ and he limped (צָלַעַ) from the verb *qal* participle masculine singular absolute צָלַע meaning "to limp". This by implication shows that Yahweh is, and continues to be pre-eminent and omnipotent. He is at the same time rich in mercy, and a consuming fire. No one comes in contact with Yahweh and remains the same, there must be a landmark, glaring evidence and a lasting memorial or reminder both spiritually and physically, the Jacobean narrative is an example. Verse 32 is also an aetiology meant to explain the origin of an old Israelite dietary law prohibiting them from eating the sinew, the sciatic muscle or the thigh (גֵּיד) of an animal to this day (הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה עַד) which could as well be interpreted to "as far as, until, while, during, up to or forever". This tradition is not mentioned anywhere else in the Old Testament but it is found in the later writings of Judaism. The Messianic Jewish Rabbinical Council holds that this dietary restriction remains a Jewish practise and involves the removal of the sciatic nerve by a *kosher* (כַּשְׁרֵי) butcher. Since this procedure is very difficult even to a trained (כַּשְׁרֵי) butcher, it is customary in the Diaspora to set aside the hind quarters and sell them to non-Jews.

We have other name play records of mostly places at the ending chapters of the Jacobean narratives. In Genesis 31:47 Laban named the heap of stones *Je'gar-Sahadu'tha* (יְגַר שְׂהָדוּתָא) which in Aramaic means "The heap of witness" But Jacob called it *Galeed* which in Hebrew גַּלְעָד also meaning "The heap of

stones”. The narrator might have been conversant with both Hebrew and Aramaic languages as a result of the exilic experience or it could have been as a result of different sources. The translations on verse 49 is confusing on who is talking whether Laban, or (most likely) Jacob, but if it was Laban the name ‘Galeed’ was already attributed to Jacob in verse 47. In verse 49 we also have *Mispah* (מִצְפָּה) meaning ‘Watch post’ for he said “The LORD watch over you and me, when we are absent one from the other. In 32:2 we have another name play *Mahana'im* (מַחֲנֵיִם) taken to mean two armies or camps, whether of the angels of God Jacob saw or his emissaries sent to his brother Esau is yet to be unravelled.

The ford of *Jabbok* (32:22) is an area of the flow of river Jordan. Ordinarily ‘Jabbok’ (יַבְבֹּק) means ‘Flow’ which constitutes another word play. In the same environment we find *Penu'el* or *Peni'el* (פְּנֵאֵל) meaning “The Face of God” for he said “I have seen the God face to face and yet my life is preserved”. In 33:17 another name *Succoth* (סֻכּוֹת) appears meaning ‘Booths’ where it is said that Jacob built himself a house and made booths for his Cattle, therefore the name of the place is called ‘Succoth’. At another location (Gen.33:20) Jacob erected an altar and called it *El-Elo'he Israel* (אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל) meaning “God, the God of Israel”. In Genesis 33:19 we see another instance of both a person and place (in the hill country of Ephraim in the north central Palestine) name ‘*Shechem*’ (שֶׁכֶּם) meaning shoulder, where Jacob purchased land from the sons

Hamor חָמוֹר (a male ass) father of *Shechem* who later defiled his daughter Dinah. In 35:7 we see another word play with description *El-bethel* (בֵּית-אֵל) meaning “God of the house of God”. Rachel, before her death and shortly after the delivery of her last son named *Benoni* (בְּנֵי-אֹנִי) meaning “son of my sorrow”. But Jacob reacted renaming him Benjamin (son of my right hand or son of the south) making him the only one their father gave name by himself and also an indication that he approved of others. And finally Jacob came to his father Isaac at *Mamre* (מַמְרֵא) also called *Kir’iath-ar’ba* (קִרְיַת הָאַרְבַּע) meaning *Hebron* הֶבְרֹן (league or confederacy). The whole idea of aetiology is tracing origins and explaining how things came to be what and how they are. Jacob’s encounter with the strange man is fundamentally aetiological to explain three phenomena.

First, is the origin of places like ‘Jabbok’ and ‘Penu’el’. Secondly, to explain the origins of the name of God’s people ‘Israel’; and thirdly, the origin of the food law. Steiner (1990) comments that, “The haunting tale of Jacob and Esau and the angel (Gen.32:24-32) is in some way generated by, and yet transcends the question: how did the Israelites refrain from eating the sinew of the animal’s thigh?” (p.17). Most remarkable is the fact that despite the change to a new name Jacob was wounded and limped thereafter all through his life. The implication is that blessings do not always come on our term, but then we have no reason to quit wrestling, which signifies hard work. Most contemporary religious leaders and preachers are yet to understand and encourage their

followers concerning the virtue and the reward for hard work, rather than blaming failure on names and perhaps their innocent ancestors. The Jacobean narrative in is an aetiological masterpiece informing the Israelite that success does not come on a platter of gold, it must be worked out just as Jacob worked hard to achieve the new name.

3.2 Literary analysis of aetiology in Genesis 32

The various forms of literature in the Old Testament have given rise to different branches of opinions, views and interpretations among scholars of various areas of study comprising of various themes. The themes constitute the theological selection or framework of the narrative contained therein from Creation to Revelation. Some of the narratives resulted from traditions that emanated along the line of formation, and perhaps from some conventional practices the people of the OT encountered along their history which they found worthy to be enshrined into the corpus of their cultural reservoir. The works of the editors and redactors, both the known and unknown ones are evident in the various and varying texts, co-texts and anti-texts which often create room for criticisms. A common feature of any OT narrative is a resounding historical clue with theological undertone. Woudstra (1970) remarks that, “The literary structure and style of the Biblical narrative often provide somewhat subtle but extremely effective clues to the interpretation of the events recounted in the text” (p.55). Literary clues often provide the key to the understanding and

interpretation of a complex passage. This work is basically concerned with the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. According to Jewish tradition, the Pentateuch is attributed to Moses, the great law giver and leader.

However, internal evidences show that many materials and narratives indicate multiplicity of authorship. For example, Moses could not have written about his own death. In Genesis 21:32, mention is made of Philistines who came into Palestine c.1200 B.C. Moses could not have known this group. The existence of such materials represents different traditions. Other instances are duplications on the creation accounts; Abraham and Isaac referring to their wives as their sisters; sometimes God is called either *Yahweh* יהוה or *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים). The existence of these various and varying traditions in the Old Testament have been a serious concern among scholars mostly from the 18th and 19th centuries.

The most common among the views is Documentary Hypothesis (DH) or Wellhausen's hypothesis, whereby the Old Testament narratives are classified into four traditions combined into their final form by several redactors represented as the 'JEDP'. 'J' is German equivalent of English letter 'Y' and represents *Yahwist* or *Jahwist* source or tradition dated c.950 which perhaps belongs to the Southern kingdom of Judah. 'E' is the *Elohist* tradition which is known for substituting *Yahweh* with *Elohim* which could probably be dated from c.850. B.C. and perhaps belongs to the northern kingdom of Israel. 'D' is

the Deuteronomists view which is probably dated from c.600 B.C. which perhaps belongs to Jerusalem during the period of religious reform carried out by Josiah. And the 'P' tradition representing the priestly (פִּהְגֹּי) writing probably dated from c. 500 B.C. and could be seen as belonging to a period during and after the Babylonian exile. In the Jacobean narratives various traditions and literary genres could be identified. Iwuagwu quoted in Okwesili (1987) identified the patriarchal tradition in Genesis 11:27-50:1-26 thus (i) Abraham's tradition 11:27-26:1-35 (ii) Tradition of Isaac 25:19-28:1-9 (iii) Tradition of Esau and Jacob 27:1-36:1-43; and (iv) Tradition of Joseph 37:1-50:1-26. In this segment, we shall consider the traditions as it relates to Jacobean narratives using John Marks work as quoted in Laymon (1984) on the Book of Genesis.

The Jacobean birth narrative is basically 'J' account. In Gen. 25:20 there is a divergent account between 'P' and 'J' in the genealogy of Bethuel (בֵּיתוּאֵל) where 'P' sees him as an Aramean and 'J' from Haran. The acquisition of Esau's birth right by tricks is a 'J' account and an evidence of literary device whereby the reader is allowed to judge the ethical justification in the aetiological narrative. The episode itself is an aetiological explanation of the superiority complex which Jacob's descendants demonstrate over the Edomites, who were Esau's descendants. Jacob's encounter with his old blind fragile father Isaac is probably a parallel combination from 'J' and 'E' traditions. This is evident in the doublet found in Genesis 27:44b and 45a thus, "And stay with

him a while, until your brother's fury turns away; until your brother's anger turns away".

At the scene of identifying Jacob, Source analysis shows that while the smell of Esau's garment is from 'J' tradition, the hairy kidskins are from 'E' source. At Bethel, Jacob had a religious experience through dream. The narrative seems to be a combination of 'J' and 'E' traditions. The vision of the ladder is typical of Mesopotamian temple tower (Ziggurat) where their god dwells at its peak. The Jacobean narrative encounter with Laban has an intention, and that is marriage. The marriage of Leah, Rachel and Jacob signify most likely a re-union of semi-nomadic groups who lost contact over many years. The narrative could also be interpreted as an editorial literary effort to give the twelve tribes of Israel an ancestral historical root. While 'J' sees the destination of Jacob as *Haran*, 'P' sees it as *Paddan'arram*, and 'E' source sees it as the land of the people of the east (28:20-22). Jacob's return to Canaan was monumentally orchestrated and beautified by an encounter with a strange being (angel) according to 'E' source. 'J' narrates the Jacobean invitation to Esau by sending emissaries to *Se'ir* (שְׁעִיר) some hundred miles to the south. The mention of *Mahanaim* (camp, company or army) is ambiguous (32:1, 2). Though it is a prototype of 'J' tradition, the explanation in verse two belongs to 'E'. The ambiguity lies on whether *Mahanaim* refers to two groups, God's and

Jacob's attendants within or without, or simply to the divine army. 'E' source seems to site Esau's abode in east of Jordan rather than Edomite territory.

The Old Testament literature with the passage of time has gone through various interpretations and translations. This is however the reason behind its literary understanding. There is history behind every literature, including the Jacobean narratives. To understand the literature of any setting is to recognise and appreciate the history behind it. History here does not refer to a story of past event per se but literarily, the original intention behind a text. The historical setting of any place is one of the methods of interpreting its literature. For example, Weis in Abbott (2004) suggests ways in which the Jacobean narratives have related to Israelite audiences in two earlier historical contexts. The first is that the story may have largely in its present form rooted in the time of Solomon, which depends on how one dates 'J' documents. However, considering 2 Samuel 14-1 Kings 2, it may reflect a context of uncertain succession from David to Solomon, a lack of clear-cut direction from God, a reversal of the claims of first-born, and nevertheless an affirmation that God's promises could work out in mysterious ways. The aetiology in Genesis 32 was perhaps an editorial reminder to the exilic or post exilic Jew on the level of victory Israel enjoyed at a time in history over their hostile neighbours like Aramea represented by Laban and Edom represented by Esau in order to keep their faith and hope in Yahweh persistently like Jacob at Jabbok.

In a second context, the final form of the Pentateuch was reached after Judah's exile to Babylon. It is obvious that every milieu and dispensation has peculiar literary phenomenon. Okwueze (2008) said, "The Old Testament, therefore, both in form and content bears the unmistakable stamp of circumstantialities" (p.238). Therefore, the proper understanding of the circumstantialities behind Jacobean narratives is enhanced by the proper placement of its literary genre. The point remains that much of the Old Testament poses a phenomenal problem when it comes to dating and literary classification. One major reason is that virtually all the writings apart from perhaps the prophetic ones are anonymous in authorship. This is why Okwueze observes that when internal criteria are lacking or extremely vague, as is often the case in the devotional and wisdom genre, even the desire of the critic cannot supply anything more than an informed guess.

Old Testament literary types are capable of creating great barriers to the inexperienced reader. In the Jacobean narratives alone we see several categories of literature like myth, saga, legend, theophany and aetiology. If such texts could be understood and interpreted well for correct application, biblical criticism must play a vital role. Biblical criticism is the application of various skills, techniques, knowledge, wisdom, and art to the corpus of (Old Testament) texts being examined. Literary criticism traditionally referred to the same studies also designed as "source criticism". Literary criticism today is

understood to mean the application to the Old Testament according to the canons of literary criticism used to investigate literature of any kind. Poetics has also helped to re-establish the unity, the beauty, the integrity, the quality, the meaning and significance of Old Testament literature. Pachuau (2015) said,

In using intercultural hermeneutics as an approach in biblical interpretation, we are bound by two principles. The first principle is about maintaining the integrity of the text. To what extent we can claim the objectivity of our interpretation of Scriptural texts is a debatable question, but the intention to be objective and to maintain the integrity of the text cannot be compromised. Some scholars who employ hermeneutics of suspicion, especially in connection with the difficulty to be free of subjectivist interpretations of texts in the postmodern discussion, seem to have thrown away even the intention to maintain objectivity. Even if our objectivity is relative, there is no reason to submit to the principle of 'anything goes'. It is reasonable to admit that our way of understanding and therefore interpretations are influenced by our culture, but that is not to say that we cannot therefore do anything about it. We can yield a great deal of objectivity if we are intentional (p.11).

However, while the socio-cultural and even religious background of the interpreter counts to a reasonable extent, with due consideration of the intention and intended impact in the targeted audience. Care ought to be taken to uphold

the objectivity of the text in question; yet while sustaining the textual objectivity, the impact as a matter of fact requires concerted effort hence, cross-cultural and inter-cultural of Biblical texts is the reason for the continual existence of the Bible after all.

3.2.1 Tricks and counter-tricks in Jacobean narrative: an editorial device

In the entire Pentateuch and especially within the Patriarchal narrative cycle are evidences of tricks, counter-tricks and telling of lies to wriggle out of strict situations. The editors observably made no effort to condemn such acts but sometimes try to justify them to the effect that at the end of each instance it is Yahweh who wins. This pattern of record falls under Fitcher's basic formula theory which follows a particular mode of presentation but specifically Herman Gunkel's unity of character approach. This literary form was the available means the authors and editors knew. Hence from the beginning, Cain lured the brother Abel to the bush where he killed him. Abraham also lured Isaac up to the hill to kill him for sacrifice but for divine intervention, though the compilers did not let us know Sara's reaction on hearing what happened. Abraham also lied to Abimelech (אַבִּימֶלֶךְ) the king of Gerar (גֵּרָר) claiming Sara as his sister and Sara was an accomplice by confirming Abraham as the brother (Gen.20:2, 5), the editors justified Abraham that God may win by adding that Sara was actually Abraham's sister by father and not by mother, but Abraham did not deny that he did something wrong. Isaac repeated the same thing claiming his

wife to be his sister before *Abim'elech* king of the Philistines (Gen: 26:6ff.) for fear of being killed. One common thing is that in each case the truth was unveiled and they only defended themselves without denying the offence. It could be that this was the most common way the editors knew best to develop their story for the understanding of the community of believers at that point in time.

Within the Jacobean narratives are numerous evidences of tricks and counter tricks. Jacob and his mother Rebekah played trick on Isaac. Jacob played tricks on Esau. Laban played trick on Jacob with his daughter Leah; and Jacob played back to Laban through the flocks and herds. Rachael did it to her father by stealing the household gods and sitting on it claiming to be in her menstrual period (Gen.31:34-35). People of Shechem planned their own trick (Gen.34:23) by negotiating marriage with Israel but Simeon and Levi feigned agreement on the condition of circumcision upon which they disarmed them and carried out genocide (Gen.34:25). Even Jacob's children played a trick on him over their hated younger brother Joseph by selling him away to the Mid'ianite traders, killing a goat, and dipping his long robe in the blood and sending it to their father telling him that a wild beast had devoured him (Gen.37:31-33). At the end of the cycle Joseph also played it on his brothers by instructing the steward of his house to secretly put each one's money back into his food sack, and his silver cup in the bag of the youngest of them (Gen.44:1ff). The editors

were masters in the use of such crafts to connect and link narratives for theological purposes.

3.2.2 Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) wrestles with a mysterious man at Jabbok (יַבְבֹּק)

The debate and controversies surrounding the editorial picture of Jacob (man) wrestling with a spirit (strange man /God) in Genesis 32:24-25 has remained an endless one. The narrator might not have envisaged that this local tale meant to and to remind his kits and kens of their socio-cultural and religious past would rise to enjoy such a global attention in the future. If he did, certain points would have been made clearer if possible. However, Willis (2014) analysed that,

Commentators have suggested various solutions over the centuries; some say the man is Jacob's greatest fear and rival, his brother came to him, disguised in the dark, for vengeance. Others have suggested that it is Jacob's own inner demons that have come calling. In verse 31, however, Jacob identifies this stranger to be none other than YHWH. But why is God now playing the part of the antagonist? Is God tired of being little more to Jacob than the dispenser of goodies? Is God trying to teach the patriarch to be a lesson about not taking divine gifts for granted? Is this a test of character or a test of faith? (p. 2).

Be that as it may in a theophany the author reveals the encounter between the protagonist of the narrative Jacob with God as in a physical combat to introduce the aetiology to explain the origin of the name Israel and a dietary law. Whether

the wrestling was emotional, Spiritual, psychological or physical exercise is another protracted issue for debate. But the issue remains that in search of self-actualization man could be wounded especially where there is a conflict between divine and human interests. The struggle often leaves behind a landmark for future references. This has been the journey of God and his chosen people Israel in the Old Testament world; they are often wounded, yet blessed. The circum-locution relationship of sin, punishment, repentance and restoration between Israel and their God is continually the case.

Being a believer does not guarantee the immunity to be above sin, hence every sin has its reward, even though at the end the believer is blessed and saved. Willis (2014) remarked that Jacob's story is a much needed reminder that in the life of faith, there is no one model to which we must conform and submit. Aetiology is theologically deployed here by the writers to teach that in life God and man have roles to play; therefore, every attempt by man to assume the role of God as shown in the character of Jacob amounts to effort in futility. God entertains all kinds of characters and personalities, even those who appear to be unconventional or irreverent by our standards. The scare to show for the recompense of slacking in faith will remain as evidence of history. Jacob was chosen from his mother's womb to be greater than his elder brother Esau (Gen. 25:23), but he did not need any tricks to accomplish that. This is not a matter of the violent taking the kingdom by force as some preachers of our time interpret

the text Matthew 11:12. One can still be violent in righteousness in such a manner that even at gun point refuses to compromise his faith. Willis (2014) commented that, "Careful observers of human relationships often notice that the same kind of energy propels both physical intimacy and physical fighting. So, too, for Jacob, this face-to-face confrontation with God is a kind of intimacy" (p.2).

Jacob had to struggle, and as a result got wounded for a God given destiny because he chose to climb to the top by undermining another person. Today the Nigeria economy is gradually recessing and crumbling partly because many citizens, especially political leaders seem to believe that by looting public funds and denying others their dues they could climb to the top. At the end of the day everybody is suffering it hence the looters suffer insecurity while the masses suffer hunger. The landmark is the pitiable state of Nigeria roads, lack of clean water supply, low power generation, poor educational infrastructure and all forms protests, militancy, insurgency and agitations.

Jacob invited the battle with the strange man and Esau so has Nigerian leaders invited the troubles that besiege Nigerian today. As Jacob has to set sought it out with God before Esau so must Nigeria because righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34). As the struggle with the strange man and Jacob lasted all through the night until daybreak, so should Nigerians be patient with any leader who will fix the nation because the

extent of damage is adverse. While the people are encouraged to exercise patience which they have done for some time, the government should also hasten up because many are dying on daily bases on the track of patience, as delayed justice makes the wise mad. The narrator who earlier created the excess power in the character of Jacob (Gen. 29:10) now introduces a scene to show that, by strength Jacob could not prevail. By strength though he exerted so much energy and even appeared to have upper hand, yet he must beg to be blessed. Sin can lead a man to beg for what ordinarily belongs to him and no matter how powerful man may claim to be the need for God's blessings will always surface.

The antagonistic wrestling strange man as a matter of last option resorted in dislocating Jacob's hip bone socket to prevail by a touch. The question about the man's identity remains a puzzle. Whether the encounter with Jacob was an accident or a deliberate mission is most probably in the affirmative. Since he had power to bless Jacob, is it not possible he also has power to kill him; so to beg Jacob to allow him go because it was dawn is an issue that requires more attention. However, why Jacob would request from someone at his mercy for a blessing is a matter for another study. These endless and complicating issues are clear indications of literary complexities unconsciously created by the author for the fact that the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 was aetiologically intended. It all borders on the theories of standard analysis, unity of character or basic formula whereby the editorial expertise displays a particular pattern of

presentation through the use of mythical aetiology to cross a bridge beyond logic and reason.

3.3 Aetiology and Patriarchal theology in Genesis 32 narrative

The Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is basically extension of the Patriarchal covenant theology traceable from Abraham in Genesis 12. God started it all by calling Abraham to live his ancestral base and relatives to a land he did not know at the time. He obeyed God and was found worthy to be in a suzerainty covenant agreement with God. The covenant was an everlasting one through all his generations, so long as they adhere continually to God's commandments, precepts and statutes. From that point it became a recurring event for every generation to experience a reaffirmation of the covenant code beginning with a prologue, "I am the Lord your God, the father of your father Abraham" followed by the content and epilogue. To this effect all the activities of the patriarchs were presented by the authors, editors and redactors through the prism of theocentricism.

Hays (1989) opine that, "Stories of the patriarchs are guided by a strong central message about who God is and how he interacts with people" (p.65). This view is supported by J.S. Semler, an 18th century biblical critic who insisted on the anthropocentric and rationalistic approach to the study and interpretation of Scripture. In Genesis 28:13 is the record of another episode of

God revealing himself and reaffirming the same covenant; and in Genesis 32:9 we see a clear reminder by Jacob to God of his everlasting covenant with his fathers, Abraham and Isaac thereby forming an extended part of the tale complex of the patriarchal tradition. Coogan (2012) said,

It may be taken, then, as a substantial hypothesis that the Jacobean narratives and perhaps the biblical narratives of similar form are to be understood as literary fictions, not only in the primary construction of the individual narrative segments but in the larger complex tales of the patriarchal tradition (p.65).

Within the corpus of the Pentateuch, patriarchal narratives could be interpreted as cycles of events. It is also pertinent to represent the ‘metonymic chain’ view to the linking together and interpreting of the patriarchal narratives, bearing in mind the prominent place occupied by the Jacobean aetiological narrative in Genesis 32. William (1991) said, “One assumes responsibility only to show continually how the signifier, the text, the sequences and functions of the text, the words, the sounds of the words, and so on refers always to another signifier in a metonymic chain” (p.50). One major reason for the similar records forming the patriarchal narrative cycle could be as a representation and reflection of views of various groups of editors with their theological intentions, interests and purposes. The group of editors’ hypothesis by Wellhausen (J, E, D, P) has enjoyed most popularity among scholars. Beginning from the first earthly family records we observe chains of recurring events scattered around the

Pentateuch mostly within the patriarchal cycle. Murphy (2011) said, “There are first individual stories which were combined in a larger complex by some unifying themes” (p.4). The unifying themes appear like cycles, and they are evident in thematic concepts like the Choice of the younger to the elder, domestic struggles and rivalry, endogamy, eponymy, tricks and counter tricks, death-bed blessings, reaffirmation of covenant and erection of altars, bareness and change of names of places and persons. Schultz (1997) said,

Determining the theology of a given text is an essential part of the exegetical process. The theology of each passage must be viewed in the light of its larger theological context, including both the theology of the Biblical book in which it is found as well as the larger concentric circle of the theological context that the theology of the major divisions or genres of the OT, the theology of the OT as a whole, and of the entire Bible (p.182).

It is only by a very close and systematic study of the OT narratives that the truth of the authorial intentions could possibly be unveiled based on the three major divisions of modern hermeneutics which range from *neumatics* (the various senses of a text) and more *heuristics* (The processes involved in deriving the various senses of texts- exegesis), and mostly *prophiristics* (derivation of sense of text through cross-textual analysis). Therefore, to judge a text without due consideration of all available techniques amount to arbitrary interpretation and

may like lead to unintended result like the change of name controversy in Abia state-Nigeria. Cotterell (1989) said,

There are broadly three options: that meaning lies in the intention of the author of the text alone, that meaning lies in the intention of the author and the text, or that meaning lies in the reader of the text. It is intuitively apparent that there is a measure of truth in all three possibilities, and that alone is sufficient to warn us against any uncritical and exclusive adoption of one or other of them (p.137).

When the Bible is interpreted from the fundamentals it will consider all necessary ingredients for a balanced application that will achieve positive results especially as it touches human relations. Martens (1997) said, “If then, the shape of biblical theology differs from theologian to theologian, even where the methods are identical, their respective social locations and hence their underlying agendas would significantly affect the result. The privileged position of the social sciences in doing OT theology has both recast the results and disclosed the bias in arriving at the results” (p.175).

3.3.1 Theological perspective in Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32

The Old Testament writers like every other author had their interests and intentions. Their major interest and intention from most indications is theological; to show Yahweh as the ultimate initiator, and preserver of man in his socio-cultural, political, economic and religious environment. The Old Testament contains elements of history, literature and more so theology. The Pentateuch is also known as the *Torah* (law), which implies ‘teaching’, or “instruction”, or ‘guidance’. It is a coinage of both late Latin *Pentateuchs* and Greek *Pentatenkh'os* which etymologically means ‘implement’ or ‘vessel’, and later ‘scrolls’ or ‘rolls’; hence the naming of the first five books of the Bible a coinage from *Penta* (‘Five’ scrolls, case, or volume) and *Teuchos* (vessel or container).

The rest of the scriptural texts are a continued expansion and explanation of the basic truth the Pentateuch theology. The books that comprise the Pentateuch are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is however, literary incoherent to tag the Pentateuch as just *Torah* (תּוֹרָה) since most texts are poetic and narrative in style. For instance, the Book of Genesis where we have the Jacobean narratives, where there is no atom of law or commandment. So it is safer to see them as ‘scrolls’. The narratives contained are presented in various literary forms and styles to offer the reader the freedom to judge the rightness of the acts displayed by every character without a direct

command. Therefore to see the change of name in Genesis 32 as a command to change ones name does not capture the intention in its entirety.

The authors and editors of the Pentateuch seem to be all out to show how Yahweh out of nothing created the universe and out of his own volition chose Israel as a people through Abraham to restore back man after the fall. The writers are most often careful and meticulous in passing judgement. They most often state the points, set the stage and allow the reader the aspect of judging the rightness or wrongness of the act. This is obvious from the fall of man where despite their sin, Yahweh made animal skin cover for Adam and Eve instead of their self-made cover with leaves. It is also clear that of all the negative character traits demonstrated by the character of Jacob there was no direct condemnation, rather the mercy of Yahweh is seen radiating around him. Harison (1992) said, "A careful study of the book of Genesis shows that over the centuries before Genesis was written various theological points of view were applied to the material, adapting it to meet the needs of the people of different generations and centuries" (p.1). He went ahead to observe that even those who deny the existence of God cannot deny that the Old Testament is all about God. This God was encountered by all the patriarchs as recorded in the Pentateuch which give a strong theological base for the significance of Jacobean aetiological narrative in Genesis 32.

It is clear that the Old Testament compilers and editors did their best to share some experiences of life which convinced them that God was a living reality. They made every effort to pass on to others their personal convictions. They took time to express their individual and national response to divine activities and the socio-religious outcome of such interactions to man. Ugwueye (2004) elaborately stated that:

Often we find that strains of theological thoughts are being described as central to the Old Testament because they chime in best with a particular scholar's own ideas of theological truth. The Bible remains the most authoritative mine of information for every reader to discover the variety of theologies in the Old Testament (p.32).

Though Ugwueye was addressing the issues of Old Testament focal view point, yet the overflow of analysis indicates that Old Testament contains variety of theologies. He concludes by remarking that each biblical Old Testament block of writing speaks for itself giving rise to individual theologies. Jensen (1978) said, "Whenever you have unanswered questions about Old Testament history, such as 'why?' rest confidently in the truth that God is Lord of all history, in whose will every event fulfils his perfect purpose" (p.43). Jensen goes on to see the Old Testament as mainly history, but a type of history he called 'sacred' or 'redemptive' history.

The Old Testament writers were mainly concerned with showing that all things come from and are sustained by the one Creator (Yahweh). Livingstone (1979) said, “Though there are striking similarities between other ancient writings and the biblical stories of creation, of the fall of man, and of the flood, the biblical interest is the origin of the universe and basically theological” (p.27). In the same vein, while trying to show that the Old Testament records were meant to interpret the vicissitude of Israel’s life in terms of divine purpose, to describe important socio-religious and cultural developments for theological lessons, Okwueze (2008) said, “Thus naturally, the writers of the Old Testament did not pay attention to historical events in their life that did not possess any vital religious significance’ (p.2).

The Pentateuch and Genesis 32 are not just literary pieces but a deliberate aetiological attempt to explain the identity of Israel in culture, religion, location, and even economy which are carefully weaved together with theological stitches. For example, they tried to show that the patriarchs had names from Abraham to Jacob directly from the mouth of Yahweh including the name ‘Israel’ as God’s own people eponymous of the protagonist of Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32. Names of places like Bethel are also through this legendary but aetiological Jacobean narrative identified with divine influence. Ralph (2003) said, “The story Israel’s ancient ancestors recounted in Genesis chapters 12 through 50 have the characteristics of legends. They contain the

series of betrothal and hospitality, of the origin of family tribes, but more importantly, God is revealed in these stories” (p.2).

3.4 Editorial name and word-play in Genesis 32 aetiology

Jacobean narrative is part of the patriarchal cycle. However, it is evident that the entire cycle is intended to trace the root of Israel as a nation at a point in history starting from Abraham. Mark (1984) commenting on Jacobean story said that, “the saga is unified by a story of biographical interest which is not so evident in Abraham stories” (p.55). This means that there is a bond of literary unity linking the Jacobean aetiological narrative in Genesis 32 with the patriarchal narrative cycle. It is basic that Jacob himself was a renowned patriarch and more so, the literary structure and content surrounding his personality in Genesis 32 aetiology to be precise, show editorial uniformity with the larger patriarchal complex. Fishbane (1975) said,

Not only is there a relationship between the several incidents related about Jacob, but these stories are also part of the broader context of the book of Genesis, a context dominated by the theme of the promise to Abraham and its fulfilment. The stories about Jacob must not be viewed in isolation. Rather, the theme of the entire section is Jacob and his relation to the promise (p.130).

The uniformity is significantly evident in areas including editorial play on names and words. Such literary style sometimes is a sign of emphasis. Curtis (1987) said, “The repetition of certain words may underscore the emphasis of a

passage or may correlate the passage with related passages elsewhere” (p.129).

However, the repetitive use of certain re-occurring words in the passage may not from the angle of conscious editorial device, it be out of literal coincidence.

Williams (1991) observes that,

Some of them, as isolated occurrences, would simply belong to colloquial expressions and so would carry no special meaning. However, taken together, they form a kind of litany that prepares the way for Jacob’s struggle with the Adversary at the spot that he would name Face of God (p.47).

The above observation is almost stressing the significant role played by the word, ‘Face’ (Hebrew פָּנִים) in the entire aetiological narrative. In line with the editorial word-play, the word (face) occurs about ten times in various synonymous forms. For example, in verses 20 and 21 alone the Hebrew word פָּנָה appeared about five times which appears to be a clear description of a ritual process. Thus:

Moreover, your servant Jacob is behind us. For he thought, I may appease him (אֶכַּפֶּרֶה לְפָנָיו-I may appease him. The Hebrew could also mean ‘to atone’ or ‘to cover’ his face) with the present that goes before me (בַּמִּנְחָה הַהִלְכֶת לְפָנָי-With the present that goes before me), and afterwards I shall see his face (וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן אֶרְאֶה פָּנָיו); perhaps he will accept me (פָּנָי יִשָּׂא-Lift my face). So the present passed on before him

(הַמְנַחֵה עַל-פְּנֵיו); and he himself lodged that night in the camp (RSV).

However, to avoid the problem of ambiguity, William went on to describe the word ‘appease’ in this context as favour, hence:

The Hebrew expression ‘to atone his face’ is particularly interesting. The ordinary way of saying ‘appease’ someone would be to ‘find favour in his eyes’ or some expression of that order. The wording here is much more serious and fraught with tangles of meaning. The noun related to כָּפַר, כִּיפָר has the common signification of ‘ransom’ or ‘price of exchange’ (p.47).

Hartmut (1977) also advanced more by lifting the Hebrew root כָּפַר in its various occurrences in the aetiology of Genesis 32, and comparing the meaning to the Greek translation λυθρον which basically carries the meaning of “means of exchange for release” (λοσσεγελδ). In essence, the gift offered to Esau by Jacob implies, ‘what comes in as the price of a life’ or ‘what can stand in for my life’. When it is in relation to God, it means release from ‘death-guilt’, and from the human side only ‘outright submission’ could be most appropriate.

The custom of conferring tribal headship on the younger son as against the elder is another deliberate editorial game play to show the overall influence of God in the affairs of man. The editors used the repeated sequence of primogeniture as a theological tool to confirm the pre-exilic prophetic ideology that, “the customs of the peoples are false” and therefore, “the council of the

Lord shall stand” (Jeremiah 10:3; Psalm 33:11). The common custom within the corpus of the larger patriarchal cycle and the entire Bible of changing names of persons and places are most often aetiological device to explain origin of names of persons and places. The changes are sometimes provisional (conditional), phenomenal (circumstantial) and conventional (situational). In the case of Abraham, it was provisional based on the covenant promise to have uncountable children and therefore conditional.

The case of changing of Jacob’s name to Israel was an aetiological phenomenon, and therefore circumstantial. However, the case of Saul changed to Paul in the NT (Acts 13:9) was conventional and therefore situational. Any Biblical interpretation that overlooks the unique nature of the various cases is bound to be misleading to the contemporary believer. The changed names served the purpose of editorial intentions which could either be premeditated or conditional. It all started with *Abram* (Exalted father) who became *Abraham* (Father of a multitude), and his wife *Sarai* who became Sarah. Jacob had his name changed to Israel in Genesis 32, and his son had his own changed at birth by the father from *Benoni* (which the dying mother gave him), by way of showing the exclusive right of a man to name his children. Writing on the significance of name in Igbo cosmology, Ezekwu (2014) said, “The privilege of name-giving is generally reserved to the parents and grandparents whom it gives an opportunity to express the importance of the child in their lives or in

general, to make a significant statement on their life experience and to express deep-felt wishes or their future hope and expectations for the child which is specifically reflected in the names given to the child” (p.22). Some places like *Luz* was changed to *Bethel* and *Jabbok* had an additional name *Penu’el*. And Gilead was also renamed and known as *Je’gar-sahadu’tha*. Each name changed has reasons behind the change and accompanied by an explanation of the meaning of the name which indicates the aetiological intention behind the story. It is also important to note that most changes in names of persons and places used in narratives are evidences of various editorial views.

Therefore, the tradition of Jacob and Esau is most probably only but a cycle mingled with the history of the origin of the twelve tribes of Israel as contained in the Jacobean narrative. Any interpretation and application that will be beneficial would first of all appreciate that fact. The narrative cycle and subsequent reconciliation of Jacob and Esau is however a neat, well-articulated and deliberately idealised aetiology. The whole tradition constitutes a chain or cycle of tribal history of the ancestral migration of the Israelites from Mesopotamia up to the banks of River Jordan from where they divided into two groups with one group under Jacob which settled in Shechem. The story also tells how Jacob came to be called Israel, an indication of the combination of two traditions, of which ‘E’ source which calls him ‘Jacob’, while ‘J’ source calls him ‘Israel’. Karmode (1990) sees poised ambiguities in the story of Jacob and

Esau when scholarship long ago concluded that the tale is a stitching together of three separate documents conventionally designated 'E', 'J' and 'P'. The Northern and Southern sources are here fused together into the story of a wrestling match, and the significant repetition that strengthens the balance between 'God's House' (Beth'el) and 'God's Face' (Penu'el). For him the story is the product of Yahwist historians trying to explain how the God of covenant chose Israel to be his means of saving the world.

Okwesili (1987) said, "Old Testament studies have revealed that some of these stories have been idealised and cannot be taken entirely as a modern interpretation of history. Some of the stories are reflections on the stories of tribal or clan movements" (p.24). This is a reflection on Fletcher's etymological aetiologies theory which borders on regular pattern of naming a place or person and the prevailing circumstances behind the name and the assigning of the aetiological nomenclature indices. The name play in the Jacobean cycle begins from the birth story of Esau and Jacob in Genesis 25. At birth Esau came out אַדְמוֹנִי ruddy (red) and hairy (שְׁעָר). From the circumstances of birth everything about Esau took its shape. Esau means 'hairy' because he was full of hairs. He was red at birth and was deprived of his birth right by an exchange with a red pottage (verse 30); he was later known as Edom (אֶדְוֹם) meaning red and dwelt in the plateau region between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of *Aqabah* also known as Mount *Se'ir* an area common with red plains. The next name is יַעֲקֹב (Jacob)

which RSV footnote translates vividly as “He takes by the heel” or “He supplants” because he held his brother’s heel as they came forth from the womb. Though Freeman (1967) sees the name ‘Jacob’ as an old name among the Semitic people as early as 2000 B.C. and which occurred among the writings of Hammurabi, which was well known among the Canaanites of the pre-Abraham days, and attested to by records in the temple of *Karnak*: yet the word play surrounding the personality around which the name was built points to deeper considerations.

The words, Jacob, Blessing and Birthright draw attention, hence; Jacob ‘*Ya’aqov*’ (יַעֲקֹב), Blessing ‘*Beracah*’ (בְּרָכָה), and Birthright ‘*Bercorah*’ (בְּכֹרָה) all of which come from the same root, pointing to the supplanting of the brother for the birthright, and tricking of the father for the patriarchal blessing. Again this looks like nothing short of an editorial artistic design. Another word is Bethel (בֵּית־אֵל) given to the place (former לֹז ‘Luz’) meaning “House of God” just because of the religious experience encountered here by the protagonist of the narrative (Jacob). Genesis 29 contains a catalogue of names of the twelve tribes of Israel by way of explaining their meanings and origin from the birth of Reuben to the birth of Benjamin. The whole dramatic scene started with the two daughters of Laban namely, Rachel and Leah. Rachel (רָחֵל ‘Ewe’ or Female sheep) the younger daughter is painted with beautiful and desirable picture, and

preferred to her elder sister Leah (לֵאָה.. ‘Weary’) painted with the picture of having weak eyes and therefore hated by their husband (29:17).

Many other catalogues of names probably born out of editors’ creativity with interpretations are thus: Reuben רְאוּבֵן (see a son), for she said, “Because the Lord has looked upon my affliction” (29:32). Simeon שִׁמְעוֹן (God heard, ‘for the Lord has had that I am hated’). Levi לֵוִי (Added), for she said, “Now my husband will be joined to me because I have borne him three sons” (29:34). Judah יְהוּדָה (Praise), and she said, “this time I will praise the Lord” (29:35). Dan דָּן (Judge), and she said, “God has judged me, and also heard my voice and given me a son” (30:6). Naphtali נַפְתָּלִי (Wrestling), and she said, “With mighty wrestle I have wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed”. Gad גָּד (Fortune), and Leah said, “good fortune” (30:11). Asher אֲשֶׁר (Happy or Gladness), for she, “said now women will call me happy” (30:13). Issachar יִשָּׂשכָר (Pay for hire or recompense) for she said, “God has given me my hire” (30:18).

The rest premeditated names, their meanings and reason behind them are which form the literary skill of the editors as observed by Gunkel’s unity of character, Mckenze’s standard analysis with Blum’s *toledoth* and historical worth evaluation theories are: Zebulun זְבֻלֹן (Abiding), and “she said God has blessed me with a good dowry, now my husband will honour me because I have borne him six sons” Genesis 30:20. Dinah דִּינָה (Feminine for Dan or Judge), “Rachel conceived and bore a son and said now God has removed my reproach

and called him Joseph (יִשְׁרָאֵל) saying may the LORD add to me another son” Genesis 30:24; by this statement she predicted the birth of another son (Gen. 35:18) and that was Benjamin (son of my right hand or son of the south). It is good to note that it was only Benjamin that the father gave a name and that was an action to the name בְּנֵי-אֵינָנִי (son of my sorrow). The explanations on reasons behind the names and their roles in the narratives like the aetiological names in Genesis 32 demonstrate the literary form and genre where they belong. Ringgren and Fabry (2006) said, “The naming of Jacob’s children by the mother in Genesis 29-30 is striking. Many of these names are given an aetiological interpretation with religious contents, reflecting the tension between the wives and the conduct of their husband” (p.148). This is a simple expression of the editor’s choice of communication style. In order to demonstrate it as a deliberate endeavor, the same formula and pattern of presentation is brought into play. Gunkel’s, Blum’s and Mckenze’s theories hold sway in the aetiological narrative of Genesis 32 from the origin of *Mahana’in, Israel* and *Penu’el*.

The discovery of the forms and genres each text belongs will offer a whole lot of help to the modern religious leader, teacher and preacher in his interpretation of Scripture for a better application. The effect of human behavior based on Biblical teaching should be able to reflect what Christianity and most world religions stand for, and that is cordiality in human and divine

relationships. Concerning the word or name play in Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32, Ross (1985) further states that none of the alternative explanations which are given are any more compelling than the etymology in the text itself, and the reversal from ‘God fights’ to ‘fight with God’ would not be unusual in a popular etymology since it uses a word play on the meaning or sound to explain the significance.

The etymology of most names of places, tribal groups and nations in the Pentateuch, including the patriarchal narratives are eponymous; the history behind the names and words used, as well as the ideologies behind the contents of the narratives show evidences of aetiology: this will be treated at towards the end of this segment. Meanwhile, according to the ancient law of primogeniture, the first son assumes the leadership of the tribe, clan or family at the death of the father. However, the position of the firstborn otherwise known as birth right (בְּכֹרָה) has its privileges and corresponding responsibilities which are not our focus here. This is evident beginning from the first family in the Bible. Cain and Abel were the first offspring of the first couple Adam and Eve. When they offered sacrifices to God, the offering of the younger one Abel was accepted by God. It is aetiology to explain a point in Jewish history when nomadic life was preferable to farming and settled life. The nucleus of the narrative which contains the probable intended editorial message reads thus: “Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground” Genesis 4:2. In a similar

manner, Ishmael was the first son of the father of faith Abraham, but the second son Isaac was chosen as the legitimate child and therefore the *Berith* bearer. The cycle continued to the time of Esau and Jacob whereby after every effort made by Isaac to transfer the covenant blessing through the first son Esau failed. His wife Rebekah was used as instrument and the second son Jacob won the covenant blessing.

The aetiology of Jacob and Esau however, is a contra-indication to that of Cain and Abel whereby in this case farming and settled life is preferred to wild and nomadic life, hence before Esau could return from the field Jacob already took all the blessings. The author clearly stated this in Genesis 25:27, “When the boys grew up, Esau was a skilful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents”. This remark forms the crux of the narrative and agrees with Alt’s historical evaluation theory, similar to the remark on Cain and Abel’s aetiology in Genesis 4:2. Both narratives are aetiologies meant to explain the history behind Israel’s from nomadic to agrarian (settled) occupations. Nomadic life is signified by hunting while settled life is signified by dwelling in tents. In the marriage of the two daughters of Laban, the elder daughter Leah was hated by their husband, and Rachael the younger was beloved despite all efforts made by Laban to make Leah the first wife. The cycle was also extended to the sons of Jacob as Joseph was loved and chosen among the rest ten elderly brothers (Gen. 37:4). Among the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh,

the younger one Ephraim was chosen for the covenant bearer blessings by their grandfather Jacob, even after Joseph made some effort in the contrary, it failed (Gen.48:14) just like Isaac's effort failed over Esau's preference.

In the final analysis, at the level of nationhood, Judah the younger in the south was preferred to the elder brothers who settled in the northern kingdom. The theological implication of preferring south to the north is based on editorial interest on the location of the Temple at Jerusalem, the only authorised centre of worship of Yahweh as far as Dtr. editors were concerned. It is however, generally good to observe that the editors were in the business of portraying Yahweh as having interest and legislative influencing over the affairs of men. It is therefore required for a biblical interpretation to put theological interest of scriptural texts into consideration after acknowledging the literary genre of such text. The issue of primogeniture shall be discussed more in chapter four, particularly as it concerns Jacob the hero of our text and Esau his brother.

The Jacob's birth narrative in Genesis 25:19-34 is centred on the birth right (בְּכֹרָה) transaction, which is an aetiological explanation on the reason why the pre-eminence of Jacob (Israel) over Esau (Edom) who was the elder Son. Through the story of Cain and Abel down the patriarchal line, God has thought man that though He made certain institutions like the sacredness of the firstborn, He also preserves the right to thwart it according to his will and purpose. This is continuously evident and recurrent in chains and cycles of

events in the patriarchal narratives. The Jacobean birth story is basically and account from ‘J’ tradition except Genesis 25 verse 19-20, and probably verse 20 about Isaac’s age; ‘P’ tradition identifies Bethuel (בְּתוּאֵל) meaning “abode of God” as an Aramean, a descendant of Aram (Gen. 10:20). Rachel is as barren as Rebekah as well as Sarah; this is a mark of ancestral cycle, a literary device used by the editor to present *Yahweh* (יְהוָה) as having the ultimate power to make one barren and to make one fruitful.

The traditions in the Jacobean birth narrative also serve as aetiological tools to explain the persistent hostility between the Israelites and Edomites. The continual conflict between the two nations who descended from two blood brothers of same parents needed some historical explanations. The narrator aetiologically presents it as a result of the first born who felt deprived by his younger brother, while the younger brother was exonerated because, he was a product of prophetic destiny; he also did not actually initiate the move to deceive his father but the mother did, who was even ready to take the curse, hence she said, “upon me be your curse, my son” (אֲדָרְבָנִי קִלְלָהָ עָלַי) Gen. 27:13. Moreover, Jacob the younger son and hero of the narrative tried all he could to reconcile with his brother upon his return from Haran. The writer however explains why Israel will always have upper hand over Edom, it is destiny at work.

Another aetiological question explained is the reason why Israel, a later settler in the Fertile Crescent will be more powerful than Edom an earlier settler in the region. It is simply because the eponymous figure of the tribe *Israel* (יִשְׂרָאֵל) was chosen as the *Berith* (בְּרִית) bearer by *Yahweh* (Gen. 12; 28:13). Eponymy is a situation whereby the name of a nation or a people is derived from their prime ancestor. This practise is common in the Pentateuch and more so in the Jacobean aetiological narrative. The two daughters of Noah had two sons from an incest by their father and named them Ammon and Moab, eventually the Ammonites derived their name from Ammon and the Moabites from Moab. In the Jacobean cycle, most scholars like McKenzie and Okwesili view the narrative as aetiology of the origin of Edom and Israel as nations eponymous of Esau and Jacob respectively.

Therefore, the formal affirmation of *berith* (בְּרִית) bearer authority on Jacob in Genesis 28 formed the editorial basis for Genesis 32 aetiological narrative. In Genesis 28 there is the reaffirmation of the patriarchal covenant channel through Jacob at *Bethel* (בֵּית-אֵל) meaning 'House of God' which is another word play. The Hebrew word *berith* (בְּרִית) means covenant. This is the first place where God ever spoke or revealed himself as God of Abraham and of Isaac to Jacob. In the socio-religious life of Israel Jacob enjoys a prominent place, and he could not have attained such a level without direct encounter with *Yahweh*. So the direct encounter at Bethel episode serves as deliberate

aetiological device to fill the gap. The aetiological implication of Jacobean Bethel encounter reveals a situation whereby the sinner is made a saint by divine premonition and Jacob was divinely and formally affirmed the *Berith* bearer of Patriarchal covenant passage. The incident at Bethel however, was used by the editors to lay foundation for the events of Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 all of which are indicated in the names of places and persons, as well as words used in the narrative which were clear reflections of editorial interests.

CHAPTER FOUR
CHANGE OF NAME IN ABIA STATE FROM THE BACKDROP OF
AETIOLOGICAL DISCOURSE IN GENESIS 32

In this chapter the study considers necessary socio-religious and cultural concepts surrounding Jacobean narratives in the OT with the climax in Genesis 32 aetiology. The consideration helps to identify the attributes of the narrative which are relevant to the burning issue of change of name in Abia state. Reference shall continually be made to traditions and cultures of Igbo people where Abia state belongs. The essence is to show how the aetiological interpretation of Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 could serve as a tool in tackling the ensuing conflicts in some areas of Abia state as a result of unilateral interpretation of Sacred texts. First of all a working knowledge of the location called Abia state-Nigeria is required.

4.1 A preamble on Abia state-Nigeria



This is the current map of Abia state-Nigeria indicating all the seventeen Local Government Areas with various colours for easy identification. The map was retrieved on 12th June, 2017 from *Google.Com*. Abia state is surrounded by other neighbouring states in Nigeria such as Enugu state (N), Ebonyi state (NE), Cross River state (E), Anambra state (NW), Imo state (W), Rivers state (SW), and Akwa Ibom state (S). The interactions existing between Abia state and her neighbours give rise to a lot of mutual socio-cultural and religious influences.

The symbols in the brackets represent the four cardinal points of geography that is North, South, East and West.

Abia State is located in the south eastern Nigeria. It was created in 27th August 1991 during the military regime of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida. It is comprised of seventeen local government areas and three senatorial zones, covering an area of about 5,833.77 square kilometres with the population of 2,833,999 (Two million, eight hundred and thirty three thousand, nine hundred and ninety nine) people from the 2006 controversial census. Controversial in the sense that most parts of Igbo land did not participate in the census due to the activities of the MASSOB, the people still suffer economically as a result. Abia State is predominantly inhabited by the Igbo major tribe of Nigeria. The general language is Igbo, while the official language is English. Christianity as the major religion up to 95% (ninety-five per cent), there are a few remnants of African traditionalists, and a handful of Muslims. The name *Abia* is a coinage form the acronym of the initial letters of densely populated areas of the region namely Aba, Bende, Isuikwuato and Afikpo. It is called God' own state because the name is found in the Bible as the father of Asa (Matt.1:7; Ref. 1Chron. 7:8-KJV). The capital of Abia state also known as 'God's own state' is Umuahia while Aba is the commercial nerve centre coupled with its cosmopolitan nature. The city of Aba was formerly a British colonial government outpost and known for women protest against taxation on women in 1929. Abia people are known

for their high sense of trade, industry, hospitality and accommodation to strangers since they are migratory in nature. This study centres most on the Christians who form the major inhabitants of the state and particularly within the two major areas of Abia Central and Abia South which comprises of nine Local Government Areas due to time factor and economic constraint. Scanty references are made to areas beyond the study locale when it helps to buttress a point.

4.2 Change of name controversy in Abia state: personal reports

In this segment we wish to report directly, verbatim as well as paraphrased some cases of change of names from personalities who were interviewed. We expect to see some successes and failures of this change of name crusade in Abia state as well as denominational and individual positions on change of names so that we shall be able to judge how best the same purpose could be achieved if the recommendations of this study are adopted. However, it is fundamental the fact that the advent of the white-man, colonial mentality and modernity or fashion are instrumental to the paradigm shift from the essence of name to the Igbo ideology, worldview and belief resulting to identity crises. A typical Igbo name carries history, testimony, emotion, faith, belief, justice, hope, joy and even sorrow. To abandon such names in haste is a risk of estrangement of historical roots. Wieschhoff, H.A. (2009) said, “Names are not merely considered as tags by means of which individuals may be distinguished, but are intimately associated with various events in the life of the individual as well as that of the family and the larger social group” (p. 212). If a distant observer could arrive at this level of truth, it signals that there more truths to be unveiled concerning the multi-dimensional essence of Igbo names.

The first case is from Sir Lucky Nwaononiwu (Personal communications, 20th February, 2016) who said that in the year 1992, in a village gathering after a monthly clean up exercise; it was suggested that the name of the village – *Umuojameze/ Umuajameze* be changed to *Umujieze* because by the understanding of the people in the gathering on that day, the name *Umuojameze* meant Children of *Ojam*. *Ojam* happens to be an extinct deity of the *Umuopara* clan. Hence they felt that majority having become Christians should reject being called Children of *Ojam*. Furthermore a prophesy had come in the 60's that the name of the village should be changed. In the excitement of the moment with only a lone voice of Mr Daniel Onumegbu who suggested they wait till all Sons and daughters of Umuajameze abroad gather together before such a decision would be taken, the gathering changed the name of the village to Umujieze.

The interim Chairman Umuajameze development in the village Chief Chukwuma Nwaubani and his executive went ahead to communicate the change to the Umuajameze/Umuojameze development Union (UDU) abroad. The communication brought about immediate opposition from the abroad members led by Chief Sampson Emezue and Chief Sunday Anyanwu; who insisted that the basis on which the name was changed was wrong; that the actual meaning of Umuojameze/Umuajameze was *Umu- ajam – Eze*, that is to say “Children have proclaimed me king”, and that Umuojameze was a confusion of tongue arising from the intonation of the people, and that people over the years started writing according to the pronunciation and not meaning. They cited many instances including that of *Ekenobizi*, which elderly people would pronounce *Okolobizi*.

However, none of the parties agreed to see it from the others point of view, both parties kept sticking to their guns that they were right. After much but failed mediations from *Umuada*, that is indigenous married women and Umuajameze Development Union Aba branch the parties went to court and the

matter has been in the court from 1993 till Court ruled that status quo should be returned to and the people appealed against the judgement and as at today the matter is still pending in court.

Problems created by the change of name

- a. It split the village into three factions
 - i. The ones that changed the name
 - ii. The ones that are opposed to it
 - iii. The reconciling group (neutral).
- b. The developmental effort of the village which was monumental was destroyed.
- c. The love and unity for which the village was known was destroyed.
- d. The people started avoiding one another and parallel leadership were set up both at family levels and village levels.
- e. Activities that the whole village were doing jointly like harvesting from palm trees stopped.
- f. St Pauls Anglican Church Umuajameze witnessed tremendous withdrawal of its members who belonged to the party that changed name.

The case above was that the change of name was for religious reasons, but those who championed the crusade were not patient enough to dig dip into the original meaning of the name they opted to change. They also hit the rocks because they could not do the proper consultations in order to carry everybody along, especially the stakeholders even when one Mr Daniel Onumaegbu tried to caution them, he would have been seen as unbeliever. The assumption was that as far as the move had a Christian interpretation God was involved and everybody should comply. At the

end of the day the community was plunged into socio-religious, economic and cultural quagmire. This is why this work opines that if the Biblical examples of name change are explained according to their individual literary genres adherents will be better informed on why they wish to change a name and how to get about it in order to achieve whatever purpose they have in mind. Texts like Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 should be used contemporarily as aetiological indices based on ethical scrutiny; otherwise a religious endeavour could lead to socio-religious dysfunction.

It is the opinion of this study that if the due process was observed and convictions achieved the counter-productive reaction by the people would have been minimal. It also appears from findings that the negative reactions by a faction were not envisaged by the preachers, such could be the result when there is a cross-cultural interpretation of texts which provokes identity crisis. Pachuau, L. (2015) said,

The Christian message communicated cross-culturally seems to have had more impact than expected by the communicators, and such impact came about in ways not expected or intended. In the past, interest in cross-cultural communication has centred on how to bridge the cultural chasm between the communicator and the recipient of the communication. Cultural differences are seen to have played major factors in the understandings as well as misunderstandings of intended meanings (p.9).

Pachuau observes that globalisation has provoked great awareness in value variations which results to acculturations of all sorts, yet global convergence of such cultures spur a new hypersensitivity fanned by the politics of identity.

The following interviews and inductive question was used in other to elicit answers that varied according to the peculiarity of each case.

Question: What is the position of your church on the issue of change of name in view of the change of names in the Bible, especially Jacob to Isreal? Do you believe that there is something either positive or negative in change of name?

Responses:

1. El-Praise Odwyer (Personal communications, November 4, 2015) said, that their church believes that one's life is affected by the name he or she bears. According to him (direct report), we advise people on the names they give to their children and even on the names they bear. For instance my name was Willoubye Odwyer when I repented, I required for the meaning of my name from my father, but he could not, only that he loved that name. More so, there were some ugly experiences I was having when I was answering my former name; but ever since I changed my name to El – Praise, I have noticed positive changes in my life.

From Pastor Praise' case we can see that the church adopts a precautionary measure which is in order. He also remarked that he observed positive changes after the change of name; this is not contestable because it is a personal report, only that it is relative and subjective. There is no guarantee that the same could be the experience of every other person. The most remarkable thing however, is that he is an individual and has the right to choose what to answer. Such individuals only need to visit a local court registry for affidavit and possibly publish the change of name in a newspaper in case they already had old documents bearing the old name for possible authentication.

2. C. C. Okeke (Persaonal communications, November 4th, 2015)

Said, my church is indifferent on names. We do not preach on that neither do we suggest on change of names. Nonetheless, that God changed names in the Bible means that there is something in a name. God can give somebody a name that confirms to the purpose of God for their life. For me as a person, I believe that a name has effects on the bearer but our church does not lay emphasis on that.

Surely, there is more to a name than mere sign of identity in both Jewish and Igbo worldviews where Abia state belongs, but then that is more reason why one should take precaution before changing a name because that name could carry an information concerning his life that is not written elsewhere in the world. We also agree with Pastor Okeke that for every incident of change of name in the Bible there a purpose, and for Genesis 32, it is an aetiological tale to explain the origin of the name Israel to later generations.

3. According to O. C. Emmanuel (Personal communications, November 5th, 2016), in my church, we strongly believe that there is something in a name and it has great effects on the bearer. If it were not so, God in his wisdom would not have changed the names of the people mentioned. Even the surname I bear is not our family name, rather a name I chose. In our church we preach it and we emphasise it.

This position is not in contention as far as due process is followed before the change is effected, the reason notwithstanding.

4. Chikezie Abangwu (Personal communications, November, 5th, 2015) said, although we don't lay very much emphasis on names or change of names, but we believe that names have effects on the bearer which may

make or mar that person's destiny. Names have effects not only on human beings even on village and institution. In our church many people have changed their names, not on the instruction of the church, but based on their personal convictions and some of them have testified of some positive changes in their lives since they changed to a better name.

The idea that a name can determine a person's destiny, attract good or bad fortune is subjective and at its best a religious superstition. It could just be a matter of good or bad coincidence. Wishes are never horses, hence not everybody who receives success greetings emerges successful at the end, and not all who receive the greeting of 'good-day' eventually have their day so good. People should be thought the dignity of hard work and not just to depend on change of name for good fortune. Some people answer fortune as a name and struggle without fortune in life. Some lunatics along the streets answer wonderful names; it is indeed neither here nor there, only God has answers to many questions of life. It is however pertinent to mention that this study has nothing against bearing a good name.

5. According to Uchegbu Nwogwugwu (Personal communications, February 24th, 2016), villages are named according to their ancestral antecedents. Some are named after the progenitor of the village. Others take after a popular deity which they believe affected them; others after one market day or the other and others a combination of the names federating together to form a single village. There are other sources of names. With the advent of Christianity, increment in knowledge through researches, and in conformity to modernity, many villages are changing their names. Our case study is an example. Former *Umuko* is a village in

Umuiwo autonomous Community in *Isiala Ngwa* North LGA of Abia state. It is a small village and has been known for ages with the name “Umuko” literarily mean “Children of Scarcity”.

Their change of name from *Umuko* to *Umu-uwaoma* has both religious and ancestral background. History has it that *Iwoo* is one of the sons of *Uratta*. He had four male Children namely; *Okpa*, *Amaro*, *Uwaoma* and *Ohie*. When *Iwoo* died, *Okpa* and *Amaro* were relatively grown up, while *Ohie* and *Uwaoma* were young. *Uwaoma* went to live with a step brother *Uko* whose name overshadowed his, while *Ohie* migrated. In the year 2008, some evangelists came for a crusade and in the course of preaching told them that they cannot be answering Children of scarcity as our God is a rich God. Luckily, the elders of the village had embraced Christianity and so they started looking for an alternative name. This took the enlightened ones into research over the history of the village, only for them to discover their real ancestral name as “Uwaoma”. They immediately adopted the name *Umuwoma* in 2009. Although there were objections especially from the heathens among them, but they were in minority. The aspect of this case that is peculiar is that some people now see change of name as a fashionable exercise. That is to say, that some people change their names to prove updated. Moreover, majority of the people concerned in this community have embraced Christianity and are duly convinced on the change of name exercise.

6. According to Paul Ugorji (Personal communications, October 10th, 2016), two things are involved:
 - a. What brought about the name?

b. What the name has done?

As Christians change of name does not really matter according to our belief in the Methodist church, because if name is changed and character is not changed nothing has been changed. Example: my own name Ogorji was a name given to my father by his mother because she gave birth to him under an *oji* (cola nut) tree. I also know somebody whose name was *Udensi* that changed it to *Udenze* but that did not change his character which still demonstrates *Udensi* spiritually. So in the Methodist church, we believe that the name which one bears does not affect him or his destiny, because one of our Bishops bears the name *Nwagwu* and he is still the bishop he did not change it and it did not affect him. In my village somebody who answers Godwin is a drunkard. In summary, for God to change Jacob to Israel, Abram to Abraham is best known to him.

In the last interview, it is obvious that it has not been the emphasis of the church to interpret the Bible arbitrarily and impose change of name on people. It means that even some Christian in such communities are against the move not just because it is entirely wrong but they need to be convinced hence the issue of religion is based on conviction. This is the case even in the next interview.

7. Okorie Ndubuisi (Personal communications, October, 10th, 2016) said, in our church change of name does not matter, what matters is one's character, unless if the person decides to do that. In our church there is no rule, no person even the bishop forces any person to change his name his name. For us a name has nothing to do with one's destiny. It is good to observe that Pastor Okorie does not imply recklessness in naming.

8. According to Eugene Uwalaka (Personal communications, October 19th, 2016), in our belief change of name is real, a name can affect one's life or destiny. For example, we believe that most of our traditional names were given to us after a shrine or an oracle of which that shrine will come after that person or his destiny in future. In my village our kindred bears *Onwunjiogu* which means 'death is right'. We were burying people frequently until we changed it to *Onwuzuruike* meaning 'enough of death' and it stopped. As a church we believe that all these bad names should be changed for one to progress because the more you bear the name you still have a covenant with the owner of the name spiritually because we believe that every name has a spirit that is in charge of it.

Lack of consensus among Christians on the change of name issue is still showing. The last interview is basically a matter of faith and agreement, of which this study acknowledges its efficacy and still emphasise that the result was not achieved just by mere change of name. Change of mindset, effort, conviction, agreement and most of all the joint faith of the people played a great role to the outcome, and this must be remarked to avoid misinterpretation. Moreover, the study encourages such people to take time and trace the history of their ancestors to ascertain what gave rise to the incessant deaths they recorded which resulted to the name. This will serve as instruction to younger generations because history could easily recycle itself. Onunwa (Personal communications, 29th March, 2016) remarks that random change of names suggestibility can make a man to lose his bearing.

9. John Eze (Personal communications, October 19th, 2016) said that their belief is that every name has a spiritual undertone or a spirit behind it. A

person's name affects him or her, for example one answering *Njoku* will always be having a spiritual attack. For example, someone in my village is answering *Ihummuo*, it is a name that was given to his grandfather when he was taking care of the shrine. In this generation no one is taking care of the shrine but they were still answering that name the spirit was killing them, frustrating them, giving them badluck till they changed the name and they were delivered from the name and the spirit. So the name one bears comes after him or her. So in Apostolic Christian Church, we believe one can change a name because the name one bears affects him just like the case of Jacob.

A special issue is raised in the last report, and that is the existence of spiritual laws. Just like every institution, there laws guiding every agreement and transaction. If a people or a person incurred the wraths of certain powers for breach of agreement they have to decide to continue form where their forbearers stopped in the transaction or break off following due process. That means they will not be enjoying the dividends that accrued from the relationship and turn the other way to play down on the rules, surely they will be liable for the outcome. Anyone who does not desire the fruit of evil should stay away from Satan's orchard. If you reject the devil you also need to reject his works. Meanwhile, *Njoku* is a deity among the Igbo people designated as the 'god of yams' and *Ihummuo* means 'a shrine'. All such institutions have spiritual connotations and their rules are believed to influence the life and destiny of those in covenant with them. If anyone decides at anytime to change the name, it is expected that change of lifestyle should accompany the decision. In essence, the person should no longer eat of the yam attracted by the transaction with *Njoku* as well as desist from enjoying the material goodies deposited in the shrines *Ihummuo* by traditional worshippers and face his newly found faith. In the Bible, we were

not told that Abraham went back live in Ur or that Jacob cheated anyone again. But then, the Genesis 32 Jacobean narrative remains from our research an aetiological expression of origins.

4.3 The Abia state society in light of aetiology in Genesis 32

Sociology and religion are all about human relationship. While the society harbours and accommodates religion, the society is in turn shaped and reshaped by religion. Thus, religion becomes the soul and conscience of the society. Christianity is a religion that preaches love, peace, harmony and hard work, such virtues also constitutes the live stream of African Igbo society. Jesus thought that love for one's neighbour is the greatest commandment (Mk.12:31). Love cannot thrive without reconciliation which is a major lesson of the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. Paul did a superlative analysis with faith, hope and love in 1Corinthians 13. John said that anyone who says that he love God but hates his brother is a liar (1 Jn. 4:19). Any interpretation of Scriptural text that ends up not facilitating social development, peace and harmony with God and man could be rated counterproductive. Obi (2012) observes that:

Religion no doubt contributes immensely both in harmonious existence of society and also in its development; but extreme adherence to and reliance on religious beliefs at the expense of one's active involvement and contributions to matters of existence is among the factors that retard societal development in Africa. That is exactly the case with Africans in their relationship with the supernatural. (p.154).

Today, some religious teachers, preachers and self-styled prophets have contributed to social disharmony (from domestic to communal level) unnecessarily from the way they interpret some Scriptural texts like Jacobean story in Genesis 32. Such preachers impose the change of family or communal names on people without taking time to carry everybody along thereby causing commotion among the people. Such preachers quote Jacob's encounter at *Pen'el* which resulted in the change of his name to Israel as a reference point and insist that without the change of name material and spiritual prosperity will not come.

This work discovered that the narrative is not intended to use change of name as a condition for prosperity, it is an aetiological genre. In biblical interpretation, we need to be concerned about determining as far as possible, how a text may have functioned in its ancient setting about the issues and questions of the community to which the text was responding. The more believers are committed to the faith claims of the text, the more likely in tune they are apt to be to its full meaning. The truth remains therefore, that some scriptural texts are more immediate with respect to meaning than others, and this depends upon a variety of factors, including who the readers or hearers are, and what their experiences in and out of the community of faith have been. Coogan (2012) said,

We have too often been divided over our misunderstanding and application of bible statements. In attempt to regulate the lives of men by the opinionated interpretations, we sometimes derive from scriptures; we have violated the important commands of love and unity. (p.120).

The Jacobean narrative encounter at *Penu'el* is an aetiological literary device used by the author to explain how the name Israel came to be. Not only that Jacob whose name was said to be changed was still known and referred to as Jacob long after the incident even till date, subsequently in the Old Testament both Jacob and Israel were used interchangeably. Ironically, the same narrator who told us in Genesis 32:28 that Jacob's name was changed to Israel soon after referred to him as Jacob in the next verse (29). This is a clear indication that a people were tracing their historical past by means of aetiology.

However, in chapter 35 when Jacob came from *Paddan-aram*, we observe another version of God revealing himself to Jacob and by his own mouth changed his name from Jacob to Israel following the patriarchal cycle of name changing from Abraham. The duplication of an account in various fashions of such manner is only an indication of multiple editorial materials and a simple illustration of authorial diversifications in presentation. It then goes to buttress the fact that each editor or editorial crew reported according to their own biases and interests, sometime using literary forms and genres like aetiology as a vehicle.

To add to the already existing literature in this area of academic endeavour, this work made enquiries from some Christians, religious leaders and preachers of Igbo land extraction in east central Nigeria over the present trend of imposing change of name on a person, family or community for religious reasons.

Hermeneutics is a theory of biblical interpretation. Within the confines of hermeneutics are goals, methods, principles and evaluative criteria used in interpreting Scripture. A balanced interpretation of Scriptural texts is the understanding of the literary genres and how they function. With passage of time and geographical distance biblical texts assume more meanings than was intended by the authors through the art of hermeneutics yet the prime intentions of the author(s) are locked in history. This is why one interpreter may see the change of name in Genesis 32 as a condition for prosperity because it came with blessings and another would see it as a tale intended to explain the origin of 'Israel' as a name for people of God. Stein (2004) said, "Even as one cannot understand what is going on in football without understanding the rules, so the present-day reader cannot understand what the biblical author meant without understanding the rules governing the genre he used" (p.211).

Therefore, to have a proper understanding of hermeneutics offers bible students the knowledge of principles and procedures of interpretation as they interact with the assumptions they bring to the scriptural texts and passages

during interpretation. Biblical interpretation is one of the most interesting and challenging activities of the modern day preacher and believer. This is most evident in complex texts such as Jacob's narratives wherein according to Weis in Abbott (2004), everything was at risk and God's activity was hard to discern in a context where the audience could connect with a story of wrestling, blessing and wounding, where God encountered and blessed those who persevered through the dark night.

In order to capture the encompassing meaning of hermeneutics rather than the common theoretical reflections of meaning as distinct from exegesis, the science of hermeneutics is customary divided into three areas namely, Noematics: which is concerned with the various senses of scriptures; Heuristics: which is the art of explaining how the senses of passage could be discoursed and Prophoristics: which offers the rules for expanding the sense of a scriptural passage to others. Brown and Schneiders (2011) observed that those divisions of hermeneutics have been found to be unwieldy and over speculative and are rarely used today, yet issues about hermeneutics remain difficult since they involve the philosophy of language and sometimes sociology. As a result of ensuring complications there is a disconcerting tendency to attribute new and highly specialized nuances to intelligible terms and difficult passages like Genesis 32. Otherwise how could human being see angels and engage in dialogue with them, fight a supposed spirit and see God's face as presented by

the narrator? In a frantic bid to approach the difficulties encountered in hermeneutics, Bible scholars have developed different classes of criticisms like textual, historical, source, form, and redaction; others are canonical, literary, structural, narrative and rhetorical criticisms. In analysing the Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 a combination of historical, redaction, structural and narrative criticisms are deployed in this work. And for reasons of emphasis the four senses of scripture developed by scholars during the middle ages ranging from literal, allegorical, moral and eschatological is weaved together to draw applicable and appreciable lessons from the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 to the present day Nigerian Christian of Igbo extraction for social peace, cultural harmony and religious unity. This will help to resolve some of the cases cited in this study, so that an interpreter identifies his approach to a text. For example, interpreting Genesis 32 from pure historical point of view may backfire.

The society is adversely affected when the scripture is interpreted and applied unilaterally. For example, in *Obingwa* (southern area of Abia state) a village called *Umuekwesu*, (this literarily means ‘*Satan’s children*’ a group of Christians conducted a crusade and changed their name to *Umuchukwu* (God’s children). The issue aroused a controversy between those who are in support of the change and those who do not accept it which affected the social peace of the community. In a similar development, (at No. 13 Nwaguru street, Aba) the *Nwagwu* (Meaning ‘son of Agwu’ the Igbo traditional god of medicine or

healing) family have the siblings answering different surnames. This is because a group of preachers invited by their in-law came from Owerri to their village in Mbaise for family prayers and changed their surname to *Nwachineke* (Meaning child of God) claiming that it was the only way the family could prosper, based on Biblical Jacob in Genesis 32. Many years later some of them went back to answer their former surname because they saw no difference as promised by the preachers. Interpreting the Bible out of context could result to confusion and disagreement. Obiefuna and Uzoigwe (2012) remarked that, “Religion is fundamental to humans’ life and living, thinking pattern, attitudes and relationships. Religion is, therefore, considered critical for any human society”(p.133). To identify the reasons behind multi-diversity interpretation of Scripture, Frethein (1983) said, “Personal presuppositions, beliefs, and perspectives are really much more pervasive in biblical study than most of us realize. Believers often differ radically in their understanding of certain texts, and the reason is most often due to the baggage we bring with us to the study of the text” (p.12). There is the need therefore, to follow some rules, principles and methods for proper study of Scriptural texts before interpretation to avoid misleading and confusing people.

There is also the need for original meaning of the name to be properly investigated before initiating and effecting a change. For example the original meaning of *Umuekwesu* is *Umuekweghiesu* (those who refused to disagree).

And the people already started answering this name before the translation of the Igbo Bible that described 'Satan' as '*Ekwensu*'. But the preachers interpreted it unguardedly using the Jacobean story as reference for change of name and it resulted to a social conflict. There is need for proper study and inquiry before taking such monumental moves as changing a person's or people's name. When it is rationally done, everybody will be happy. For example, the researcher has once conducted a family prayer at Orji River whose surname was *Onwuemerie* meaning 'death has won'. This name was as a result of incessant cases of death during the time of their fore-fathers. After the prayers and common sense application based on confession of faith, the entire family saw a better sense in changing their surname to *Chukwuemerie* that is 'Godwin' or 'God has won' which they answer till date with everybody in agreement. In Africa and Igboland precisely, a name carries so much weight and influence to be changed arbitrarily.

As Onunwa (2012) rightly said that the original meaning of such names may be lost and new ones imposed on them by either foreign or indigenous writers. In his own opinion and findings, Eluwa (2008) said, "But it should be remembered that the meanings of words do change with time and usage. Such a change should be expected of the Igbo language considering the influences on it during the journey of the Igbo people through many lands" (p.651). Onunwa observes that most people fear to argue printed information and more so when it

is attributed to some erstwhile respected missionaries or colonial officers or anthropologists. For instance and ironically too, some Igbo names of towns misspelt or mispronounced by colonial administrators or anglicised by missionaries are still accepted by Igbo people up till date, their present level of enlightenment notwithstanding. Such names as *Afikpo* (Ehugbo); *Awka* (Oka); *Awgu* (Ogwu); *Awkunanaw* (Okunano); *Onitsha* (Onicha); *Owerri* (Owere); *Oguta* (Ugwuta); and *Enugu* (Elugwu). Onunwa further observed that many personal names, names of trees, markets, terms and objects have been changed or modified and invariably, they lose their original meanings.

The fact of the matter is, if such names still exist and are regarded as having influence, it could either be from the original name or the anglicised one with error. Suffice it then to say that though there is as much something in a name as there is nothing in it. What you call your dog automatically becomes its name. When certain Scriptural texts like the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 are over interpreted it could be risky for consumption. In the case of *Umuojameze* in *Umuopara*, Umuahia south of Abia state name change controversy, it was later discovered that there was nothing satanic about their original name; rather it was the problem of diction. The name ‘*Umuojameze*’ which the preachers traced to ‘*Ojam*’, a shrine in ‘*Ezeleke*’ in the olden days has never had any link or connection with their village, rather the ‘*Umuojameze*’ was the name of their great grandfather, etymologically

rendered as ‘*Umu-ajam-eze*’ meaning “Children have made me a king”, and not as the zealous preachers interpreted it as ‘*Umuojameze*’ (Meaning ‘children of ‘Ojam’, a shrine of *Ezeleke*) as allegedly implied in the book “Ado-Na-Idu: history of Igbo origin” by Eluwa in 2008. This case which has been in the law court for over twenty years resulting to series of social violence, conflicts, victimizations, hatred among relations and family members, including Church congregations. It has also resulted to social-religious disharmony, including economic and cultural setbacks; all as a result of interpreting and applying scriptures like the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as a divine command instead of a literary genre.

4.4 The aetiological episode at *Mahana'im* in Genesis 32: implication for Abia state

The crafty ways through which Jacob obtained his brother, Esau’s birth-right (בְּכֹרֶתָהּ) and patriarchal covenant blessing back home in Canaan warranted his becoming a refugee at Haran. In the same way his maternal uncle Laban denied him his first choice of a wife in a crafty way. Jacob in due course played a counter craft against the enslavement tendency of Laban and became wealthy in flocks, in servants, in camels and asses. At the discovery of his trick by Laban Jacob also fled from Haran back to Canaan. Jacob left home in fears and with fear he is returning home. In Jacobean narratives there is craft in literature where in the author presents various and varying characters with human forms,

and offers the reader an opportunity to judge and ascertain the morality personified in each character. The episode at *Mahanai'm* in Genesis 32 offers the reader a platform for the ethical assessment of the character of Jacob in the narrative. The hermeneutical significance of such assessment introduces us to the lessons derivable from the encounter to be discussed as follows:

4.4.1 Learning to face our fears in life through Jacob's story

Every Scriptural passage has a message and meaning (what it meant) to the original recipients and the significance (what it means) for future believers because it carries the inspirational signature of God who remains the same yesterday, today and forever. The challenge faced by preachers and religious leaders is how to appreciate the intended message of the text based on the location and period of authorship and as well make the moral lessons understandable and relevant to the modern believer; this is the work of historical criticism. It requires a lot of diligence and discipline to figure it out otherwise many interpreters often go the easy way of assigning anyhow meaning to texts.

Wuthwein (1979) said:

Certainly it is important to establish the time, place, events, persons, general milieu, and sources. All of this is necessary in order to help the reader understand the literary document. Sometimes historical reasoning has been used in a negative way to argue that humankind's contemporary experience of reality should be the plumb line to establish the meaning and significance of ancient texts, even though these ancient texts

recognized a worldview different from that of the modern world. Clearly, this does not allow a manifold witness of the OT to challenge us seriously or speak to our contemporary worldviews (p.2).

In Genesis 32:1-2 Jacob remembers the similar encounter with divinity at Bethel and how God promised to bring him back to the land and how he also vowed to worship God and pay his tithe. It is remarkable that Jacob's final statement at Bethel, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28:17) is replicated here in *Mahanai'm* thus, "This is God's camp". Jacob was already camped and that helped him to confirm that God's presence was in that place. In the usual editorial manner, he named the former 'Bethel' and the latter 'Mahanaim' signifying aetiology to explain the monumental locations that serve as colouration to the entire Jacobean narrative. The names were assigned to suit the intention of the picture painted by the author and not just an example to be emulated at random. Bethel as a place is significant for being the house of God where God would dwell by way of a location where the temple (the house of God) would be built as juxtaposed to *Mahanai'm* which is located outside the land of promise as a temporary camp. So that life outside the place of God is temporary and transient, it is only in Yahweh that man has a home which offers a permanent rest and peace.

Jacob therefore saw the place outside the Promised Land as a mere camp just as the tabernacle in the wilderness. God knows how to prepare a man to face his own fears as he camps with Christians in Abia state, in the present fearful and

horrific economic and political situation. Patience, unshakable faith and absolute trust in God is required, so that people do not end up in nets of religious peddlers or mediocre in form of preachers. Like Jacob God camps with the faithful and assures them protection against the fears emitted by the activities of militants, kidnappers, and terrorism by *Boko Haram* and Fulani herdsmen. It is all temporary and a passing phase, all amount to a temporary camp. God offers us the chance as to Jacob to look up to him, not only to promise but to be faithful to him by being just in our attitude and to frankly seek to reconcile to each other through a resolve for sincere dialogue for a better and peaceful Nigerian society of Abia state extraction where we can only enjoy a permanent peace of our dream.

The story of Jacob cuts across the socio-political, religious and cultural life of the people of Abia state-Nigeria and the entire globe at large. Whatever you call your dog becomes the name is a common saying. The saying also has some limitations and variables when the behavioural attitude of the dog is placed on a prism of observation. Igbo people believe that "*The is n'aha eme*" which means that 'events are influenced by a name'. The religious preachers with particular reference to Abia state Christians couch on this ideology to interpret Jacob's mysterious change of name in Genesis 32 as a yardstick to show that a name can change destiny and attract material prosperity. This could be true based on the platform of faith. If it is referred to as superstition it is not intended to be derogatory but as a facet of religious belief, or something that cannot be explained

by reason. The influence of name on events or destiny is not only relative but subjective. When it is placed under verification, the result is not obtainable in all cases. But based on common sense, mere answering or changing of name could guarantee fortune then hard work will be relegated to the background and wishes would have become horses.

4.4.2 Resolve for peaceful reconciliation in Jacobean narrative: a better attitude for social harmony in Abia state-Nigeria

All the religions of the world have their golden rules which centre on healthy attitude towards God and fellow man. In Christianity the healthy attitude is referred to as the “Gospel of reconciliation”. In Igbo traditional religion the golden rule is called “*Onye biri ibe ya ebiri*” or “*Egbe bere Ugo bere*”(live and let live). This is not to say that there will be no conflict at all, hence human beings are prone to personal biases and parochial interests. The issue is that every conflict has a better way to resolve it than violence. The narrator of Jacobean encounter with Esau helps to fathom this fact in Genesis 32:3-21. Every religion holds the belief that the Supreme Being lives above from where he oversees human activities. The unseen forces overrule in the affairs of man. When anything goes wrong and man finds himself into trouble he makes effort to appease God who is the ultimate receiver of the offence even when it is meted against a fellow human being. This was the case in Jacob’s life as narrated in the aetiology of Genesis 32. Jacob offended his brother Esau but he felt God was not happy with him. Therefore,

before he faces his brother he must first appease the God whose image his brother carried. Obi (2012) cautions that, “Religious leaders should work conscientiously and untiringly to exorcise religious bigotry and extremism from within their faith traditions” (p.160). When religion is properly handled, social development and human relationship can be positively facilitated. Obi went on to add that; “Religion provides powerful motivation for many people to act the way they do. It equips many of the world’s people not only with moral guidance but also with the will to improve their lives and as such remains an integral part of societal development if properly managed” (p.159). In Nigeria today and particularly in Abia state, if religious practitioners will resolve to reconcile sincerely with almighty God as each group claims to worship, the society will be a better place to live. In Genesis 32:9-12 Jacob enters into a serious reconciliation prayer after he had expressed his earnest desire to reconcile with his brother in 32:3-8 which will be discussed under horizontal reconciliation.

Within the vertical reconciliation verse there is a beautiful work of literary art displayed by the editor. He uses the same word (מַלְאָכִי) for angels in first and third verses. In the first verse the “angels’ were messengers sent by God to Jacob where as in the third verse the messengers were sent to Esau. The angels within this corpus served as harbingers for the Lord meeting with Jacob in Genesis 32:24-11. Similarly, the angelic messengers were sent by Jacob to Esau to prepare the way for Jacob’s meeting with Esau. When there is a conflict between two

individuals, communities or ethnic groups there is need for a conflict resolution committee (CRC). The major work of this committee is to work as a pathfinder for the resolving the conflict and the end of the day procedures are to be dually followed as in this passage. At some occasion the CRC could be voluntary especially within the kindred. And for the reconciliation to take place the conflicting parties must display sincere willingness for peace which will eventually lead to social harmony and economic progress among any people.

The character of Jacob who deceived his father and brother provoked a conflict between him and God; his conscience hunted him while he was running away. Willis (2014) said, “Moreover, even as Jacob finds himself facing up to his divine opponent and surviving it (notice the language of *‘Peni’el’* in verse 31), so Jacob also finds the resources to face his brother and embrace him. In 33:11, Jacob connects the two events saying, ‘For truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God, since you have received me with such favour’” (p.2).

God is always interested that men live in peace and get reconciled when conflict arises, because it affects his relationship with man. Nmah (2009) said that, “In every case, the way to celebrate reconciliation and peace lies through an effective grappling with the root cause of the problem” (p.36). That was why, when God saw that Jacob’s attitude could not lead to a peaceful reconciliation, he sent his angles to draw his attention back to his roots and at two strategic occasions and locations (Bethel and Mahanaim) during his running away and his

return. This is no doubt an editorial effort by Old Testament authors who used aetiological tales to draw the attention of the people of Israel back to her ancestral roots to achieve peace between Israel and her neighbours. Therefore, to interpret such texts Winton (1958) comments that, “Many methods and many perspectives must be used, but they must, to have integrity, allow the OT Scripture to exhibit their true character along with their original genius and inspiration” (p.3).

The prayers of reconciliation by Jacob in verses nine to twelve was an aftermath of the moves of the Lord in sending his angels. In this prayer Jacob poured out his heart before God in an accurate scouting of his past. This is a pointer that fruitful reconciliation could only be achieved when those involved indeed decide not to cover own weakness. Humility is a veritable instrument to own up one’s faults and this could only be provoked when we are reminded of our days of little beginnings; when personal interests are relegated to the background paving way for common interests. The author(s) of Jacobean narrative also used the aetiological tales to explain to his generation of fellow Jews how from the beginning God has made the patriarchal family one until the selfish interest of Jacob gave rise to conflicts.

However, peaceful reconciliation is a must no matter how far Jacob could run away, he must return to face his Esau because the same God he offended in Canaan also rules in Haran which can only serve as a temporary refugee camp and Laban a figure, a pointer and reminder that Jacob was a stranger. But in such

situation hope is held up that reconciliation is a sure possibility and the only way forward if Jacob's destiny must be fulfilled. Haran in the narrative is like the land of relational and vocational heartache, where our dreams turn into night mares but where the lord demonstrates his faithfulness by showing us ourselves and showing us himself paradoxically. Broken dreams teach us that even when we are unworthy God is consistently faithful. When we see his faithfulness in the face of our unworthiness, we become the kind of people who pray Jacob's prayer.

Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 has shown that for a horizontal reconciliation (peace with man) to take place, there must first of all be a vertical reconciliation (peace with God) as guarantee for a way forward. This move must be preceded by a personal resolve by each conflicting party for a reconcilable meeting point. The narrator demonstrated such reconciling attitude with Jacob's character in the passage. Uche (2009) said:

The way to reconciliation lies through an effective grappling with the root of cause (s) of the enmity that exists among men and with God. There is a barrier in man's life despite the free gift of reconciliation because God demands holiness in man. This explains that reconciliation is both man-ward as well as God-ward (p.116).

The first step for reconciliation was made by Jacob inverse three to six where he sent messengers to his brother to inform him of his return. This move was another way of ascertaining how furious the brother's anger after twenty years. The play on words by the author serves as a link to the aetiology of the birth of Jacob and

Esau where Esau was said to be hairy *Se'ir* (שְׂאִיר) and ruddy *Edom* (אֶדוֹם) Esau becomes a hairy person residing on a red plain whose bait for failure was a red stew. For a reconciliation to take place there must be humility and mutual respect, Jacob demonstrated this by referring to Esau as 'Lord' and identifying himself as servant in verse four despite the fact that Jacob was to rule over Esau by destiny (Gen. 25:23) which was confirmed by Isaac death bed blessing (Gen. 27:29,40). Jacob hereby recounts how wealthy he has become in order to convince Esau that this time around he is not contending for material wealth but for reconciliation. This scene has a narrative link to Abraham's submission to Lot (Gen. 13:4) when one could endure material gain for the sake of peace.

The idea of sending messengers to Esau by Jacob to secure his favour (face) is strong indication that no matter how smart a man could be, one day he would depend on someone else to succeed. The horizontal relationship of man with fellow man must be cordial if nothing else for the sake of God and future. This is very important despite the level of vertical relationship anyone claims to operate. In the case of Jacob, he had continued to take what belonged to Esau with tricks but this time it could no longer work, his consent must be sought at least without any bait. It is like Nigerian government and global oil firms who for decades enjoyed the dividends of oil in Niger Delta regions without care over the environmental damages the inhabitants suffer which has now given rise to militancy of which the security of the pipeline largely depend on the inhabitants. It

could also be as a result of Jacob's new approach to issues of life and his eagerness to depend on God this time. The reason could probably be as Scott (2005) said, "Perhaps because his options are limited, but perhaps also because he is beginning to trust the lord" (p.94).

The lesson is that at certain points in life we will need each other. Jacob succeeded earlier to take Esau's blessing using the blind conditions of Isaac (Gen.27:1) but after twenty years he would need Esau's consent (horizontal relationship) to obey the Lord's command (vertical relationship) to go back to his country and kindred (Gen. 32:9). This is a perfect weaving together of life situations as created by the skilful editor of the aetiology of Jacobean narratives to the effect that he who hid behind animal skins to trick his way through and hijacked his brother's blessing now appears to come out in the open to offer the blessing back to him. This was done to secure the face of Esau by sending messenger of which the clause "before him" לְפָנָי occurs about four times in Genesis 32:1-13, the importunacy in seeking peace is a big lesson. Ralph (2003) said,

There are many literary forms that appear with some regularity in the OT genealogies, narratives (fictional and didactic), saga and debates; while this is not a comprehensive list, it highlights the importance of considering the literary form when interpreting a passage from the Scriptures. If you read carefully, you will recognize when the biblical author is using one or more of these literary forms and you will be able to interpret the text accordingly. Then you will see the richness of this

ancient literature and appreciate how it can be read with new eyes in every generation. (p.4).

What Nigeria needs in the present situation just as Jacob the eponymy of Israel in Genesis 32 is reconciliation with justice, equity and fair play; not just on pages of news papers, media broadcasts, policies and bills, but in the practical sense of it. This could be possible when it starts with instilling moral conscience in both the leaders and the led and by making the law and the constitution of the land supreme as it contains, and getting rid of the idea of sacred cows and the obvious roles of ‘God-Fathers’, nepotism and ethnic chauvinism in every area of polity. On this note, Uche (2009) recommends that,

There is need for a collaborative research into peace and reconciliation studies. This may be carried out at cross-cultural level and could be aimed at creating greater awareness on the negative effects of the injustice which have promoted extortion, Godfathers, mediocrity, favouritism, victimization, discrimination and marginalisation of a section of Nigerian nation (p.120).

Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed (Gen. 32:7) at the report of the messengers he sent to his brother in the land of *Se'ir*. The mention of Esau coming with four hundred men to meet Jacob synchronized with Davidic militancy narrative (1 Samuel 22:2; 25: 13) and offers indication for editorial connectivity within the ideological corpus of Old Testament authorship. Jacob was temporarily suspended

in his imagination of the possible outcome of the meeting which could either be reconciliatory or retaliatory. A man can save himself of such self-mitigated tensions by dealing with his fellow man in a just and noble manner not minding the religious, political, tribal and socio- cultural differences. Otherwise the option adopted by Jacob to imagine the loss of a twenty years laborious dividends in human livestock and materials (Gen. 32:8) would not have been necessitated. Hence, Willis (2014) said, “The character of Jacob and the character of God are both remarkably displayed in this passage. God does not punish Jacob’s conflictive character, but challenges it and reshapes it so that Jacob is able to live into his promised destiny as Israel, which according to verse 29 means ‘one who strives with God and humans’”(p.2).

However, Jacob is seen for the first time forced to his knees as no other option was better. In such conflicting predicaments if men would learn to sincerely show their religiosity and reconcile with God in order to humbly follow peace with men, wars and incessant conflicts will be reduced to the barest minimum both in the globe and in Nigeria hence the ever shrewdly powerful and tricky Jacob is now wearing the garment of desperation and maturity. His unscrupulous way of achieving his goals in life and his skilful manoeuvrings worked with Esau in Canaan but could not work smoothly with Laban at Haran where he had to toil in hardship for at least fourteen years. This shows that we can have our way sometimes and some places but not all the time in all places. At a point what was

avoided before may become unavoidable hence, it becomes inevitable to face Esau. Aetiologically, these narratives were weaved together in Genesis 32 to teach Israel that pride, selfishness and greed in human relationship affects the relationship with who values all his creation and wishes to judge them without our interference.

4.5 The relevance of Jabbok change of name episode in Genesis 32 to Nigerian Christians of Abia state extraction

When God manifests himself to human senses either in material or angelic forms it is called theophany. The Old Testament authors used theophanies or mythical aetiology as a literary form to sort out and explicate any narrative scene whereby human and spirit beings meet. The Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 belong to the literary genres with peculiar theophenies. When theophanies occur the spirit beings are made to communicate with man as if they are fellow men and they speak either directly as if God was speaking or as messengers representing God. The prologue of Genesis 32 is a type of theophany whereby Jacob saw angels of God and made his conclusion, “This is God’s army!” without any communication. In the middle of the passage Jacob was alone and wrestled with a man whom he interpreted in verse thirty as God. And the epilogue shows the sustained evidence of the theophany.

In verse twenty-two which begins a segment of the narrative the clause “he spent the night there” serves as a replicate and a weaving together of the concept

which was used in Genesis 28:11. It appears the author uses such clause to arouse the attention of the reader to expect an encounter thereafter and enhance the flow of the narration. All theophanies or mythical aetiologies in the Jacobean narratives are seen to be preceded by being 'left alone' in such extra ordinary nights; whether at Bethel, Mahanai'm or Jabbok. In Genesis 32:14 Jacob is presented as very busy creating a conducive atmosphere for a meeting to guarantee a peaceful reconciliation with Esau or his own safety. The moral justification for using his wealth and his family members to shield himself from possible attack from Esau is yet another issue. Knight (1992) sees the narrative as aetiology using a midrash-style approach whereby Jacob's wrestling with the strange man is typical of Jewish-Christian relationship. He connects the Jacob figure facing his cheated brother with Christians facing up to the shame of the way they often define the identity of their faith over and against Judaism, and the historical consequences of such risky act. Knight who shares this view with scholars like Auschwitz believes that as an aftermath, Christianity was going to face a shameful legacy of racism, sexism, and economic oppression as we have it in around the globe and in Nigeria today.

Though Knight's interpretation of Genesis 32 is subject to a debate, yet the recommended reconciliatory approach to the estranged brothers is a worthwhile solution. Such Scriptures if applied in the Nigerian present situation could result to peaceful coexistence in the country despite past records of offences against people

of different tribes, religions, cultures and perhaps against people of other political persuasions. Blum (2012) sees reconciliation possible as long as every faction will be ready for a sacrificial, selfless and sincere interaction at the centre just as the editorial demonstration in the Jacobean narratives between personalities built around Jacob and Esau, thus:

The divine solution comprises both the blessing one and the unblessed one, as the finale of the finale shows: seeing Esau in the morning light of the next day near Penu'el, Jacob bows down to the ground seven times before his brother. This suggests an almost verbatim reversal of the blessing that Isaac had given to Jacob in 27:29. In other words: the blessed one as he bowed to the unblessed one gives up any triumphant claim on his superior status. At the same time, however, Esau shows by embracing and kissing his brother that he on his part has given up the old strife (p.186).

In essence, whatever economic, religious, political and geographical advantage any peoples' group has over the rest must be played down on and deemphasised if there would be a meaningful and lasting reconciliation and continual coexistence the multi-ethnic, religious, and cultural nature of Nigeria as a country. The same night in verse twenty two Jacob sent the gifts through his servants to Esau in droves. That same night he crossed his family members in two camps across the ford of the Jabbok, a tributary of the River Jordan, a sort of boundary to the Promised Land and the last major barrier between him and Esau. The variables, accidentals and fall outs of the narrative process constitute

the socio-religious significance of the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. For example, the idea of being left alone while Jacob left home and being left alone again after twenty years when he had a large family and plenty of wealth is an indication that a time will always be when a man will be left alone whether in life or in death not minding his position, status, wealth and class. At such points riches no longer count but our past attitudes do hence, “Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death” (Prov. 11:4). A similar concept renders it as being naked hence “naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return (Job 1:21).

The writer of Psalm 51:5 conceptualises this nakedness as a semblance of sin hence, “Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me”. This is a weaving together of the Genesis 3:7 that the first consequence of sin in the world is the consciousness of nakedness. Scott (2005) said, “That point is often reached when we face an encounter that is no longer avoidable. The Lord leads us to these places, just as surely as he led Jacob to the bank of the Jabbok. Like Jacob, we may have to remove ourselves from comforting distractions, feel our nakedness before God, reconnect with his faithfulness and meet with him alone, without the false face” (p.97). With reference to the passage after about a thousand years a saviour was to be born and at the peak of his mission on earth he would be left alone, “The hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, every man to his home,

and will leave me alone; yet I am not alone, for the father is with me (John 16:32). Just like Jacob was left alone Jesus was also left alone and each faced God and angels. The fate of a man when he is left alone is dependent on his past relationship with his fellow man. To choose to be just in a world where justice is determined by the interest of the players of justice is not a palatable choice to make. Luke (9:23) the writer and physician refers to it as carrying across hence, “if any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”.

The picture painted by the narrator of Jacobean story in Genesis 32:26 shows a man struggling with the consequences of his past due to an envisaged unpalatable immediate future as a result. It was a do or die affair as Jacob insisted on not allowing the opportunity slip him hence he said, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me”. The dramatic scene could be illustrated with two people making strong efforts to throw each other down, that one embraces the other and attaches himself to him with his arms. The blessing may not be for material wealth hence he was already rich and blessed materially, but the reference to divine blessing including grace of forgiveness and reconciliation with both the God of his father (vertical) and his brother Esau (horizontal) whom he had offended in the past. By implication, the author is showing through the aetiological Jacobean narrative that concerted efforts should be made at every opportunity to seek for reconciliation with both God and men for

a better society and posterity. To slack from such golden opportunities may amount to going back to Haran, a connotation to voluntary submission to perpetual servitude and endless torture, either by socio-religious order or conscience. This calls for emulation by Abia state Christians from areas affected by the change of name controversy. There is need for each party to submit to a sincere and altruistic dialogue with the intent of peaceful resolution of the matter no matter how deep the hurt, if we mean that we are Christians for real.

In Genesis 32:27 we see the author make a point clear. A time will come in life when the truth may no longer be hidden. The same Jacob who denied his name (Gen. 27:24) could no longer hide. Prior to this time his antics helped him to succeed with Isaac, Esau and Laban but before the “strange man” the truth must be said. Those who padded Nigerian budgets over the years got away with it but in the present administration the truth must be said at least if nothing else the exposure. Nigerians now know how some of her rich citizens make their money, mostly in this era of whistle-blowing and anti-corruption crusade. When the cheeps are down, there shall be more revelations even in Abia state among such flamboyant ministers who made their riches by deliberately interpreting the Bible out of context to attract financial patronage from innocent worshippers.

At the moment of truth Jacob owns his name “I am Jacob (the heel Grabber, the supplanter and deceiver)”. Having grappled with fake success

without achieving peace, he now desires genuine success. For the new to come the old must give way. The same Jacob who hid behind animal skin to obtain his father's blessing, who sent gifts to Esau to hide his face now comes out of hiding to answer his real name. A time comes when we must be ourselves in order to move forward, when mere rebranding, selected change mantra and segregate justice would create more confusion as is the case of Nigeria today. The wise man said, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsake them will obtain mercy" (Prov. 28:13). Just like in the case of Jacob the change of name is a different ball game from a change in character.

The question of whether the change of name from Jacob to Israel affected his life afterwards in terms of prosperity and good character is another matter of great debate and remains one of the high points of this research. The name is more than a blessing which Jacob requested for, and it is related to the Hebrew word for 'strive' which the editor weaves together with Jacob's striving character both with God (the strange man) and men (Esau, Isaac and Laban). But to credit Jacob the victory in the struggles is a difficult judgment. He couldn't have won Isaac and Esau and embarked on an unknown journey to be voluntary refugee. Had he won Laban he would not have also be on the run from Haran and would not have desperately sought for Esau's face. The aetiology of the story of Jacob informs us that no matter how bad we have gone,

both as individuals and as a nation there is room for reconciliation. Jensen (1978) said: “The story of Jacob shows how God can lay hold of a selfish, wilful, deceitful man striving by his own efforts to gain material blessing, and so transform his life that in the end his character is noble and beautiful, with a new outlook on what is true blessing” (p.76).

The author however, implored somewhat literary aetiological expertise to declare a wounded and helpless man as the winner using the injury as a constant reminder of his weakness after all the cravings of life.

Willis (2014) observed that the Jacobean narratives remain a challenging to any attempt in demonstrating God as the deity who fits into some easy mould, whether that is “the wrathful God” or the “God who meets needs”. Jacob came away from the encounter with unbounded blessings, but he also walked away limping, a man permanently marked. The weakness and helpless scene became the greatest victory. The place of his injury became the place of his blessing. At least now Jacob is made to ask for blessing instead of the usual life of tricking his way through. He has now learnt how to trust and depend on God for success rather than trusting in his human strength and sense. His character according to the narratives could also fetch him the blessing hence it is not godly enough. Vos (1948) said:

One may ask why Jacob consistently received God’s blessing when he so often failed to demonstrate godliness. The answer is suggested by the

central theme of Genesis itself. The promise was based on God's nature and faithfulness, and its fulfilment was based on God's grace (p.108).

The author through aetiology thus achieves his aim of explaining the origin of the name of his nation 'Israel' through whom other nations of the world would be blessed and saved. The more important lesson of Jacobean cycle is that God will accomplish his goals even through uncooperative tools. The author either deliberately avoided the details of the blessing or intends that the reader fathoms it. But it is most probable that his attention is more on aetiology of the name *Isra'el* and *Pen'el*, hence Jacob goes straight to exclaim how he has seen God's face and still lives. Here is another connection with *Beth'el* meaning 'House of God' and *Pen'el* meaning "face of God".

The unknown man who refuses to disclose his identity is now identified by Jacob as God. In the Old Testament theophanies, God often briefly appeared as a man but in the New Testament he will become man and dwell among men hence, "And the word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The narrator has shown the evidence of the saying "Jacob I love" by allowing him to live after seeing God face to face as a result of abundance of mercy (Exod. 33:20; Isa. 6:5). The vertical reconciliation was a preparation ground for meeting Esau face to face and surviving as well resulting to horizontal reconciliation.

Though the sun of new beginning had risen on Jacob as a sign of warmth to move into the promised land, a sign for a new day, a new Jacob and a new era; God would not leave him without a mark to remember his past each time he limped to reunite with his brother and people. Israel as a nation and his descendants would set aside the sinew of the hip of the animal to commemorate their ancestor's encounter with God. They will prevail as Jacob, but that would not be without being wounded and continual dependence on God. This understanding casts a fore shadow to the future Messiah through whose wound his people would later be healed (Isa.53:5).

From the lessons of the Jacobean narratives it is certain that when we fight against God or the truth with our attitude to one another we get wounded because the life in others resides in us. When we push against life, it pushes back on us. God himself who is the source of life sometimes leaves us wounded so that we are disabled to fight any longer and as we give up he takes up our fight and makes our victory his glory. Then our place of wounding becomes the place of blessing just as Jacob's character in Genesis 32 aetiological narrative. Blum (2012) understands the narrative as a blessing oriented encounter, hence:

In wrestling with God, Jacob wins the blessing all over again just before the meeting with Esau. Moreover, the new name he receives marks his change. He is a new man, not the trickster anymore as Esau had rightly called him, but he who was in strife with God about his blessing (p.185).

For Christians all over the globe today and in Nigeria with particular reference to Abia state, it is pertinent to draw a lesson from Jacob's experience as pointed out by Vawter (2013) that most times believers may be tempted to rely on their own strength and cunning when it comes to temporal things and on God only as a last resort like the case of Jacob in Genesis 32 who finds himself physically wrestling with God in an attempt to secure blessing and protection. The Jacob character of the narrative affirms the fact that human strength and craftiness in overcoming spiritual obstacles cannot guarantee success. The irony of the narrative is that Jacob did not know that he was foreordained to prevail and had to involve himself scheming to get an already God given endowment.

However, the overall implication of the story is somehow elusive, such that it characterise Jacob as persistent, relentless and resolute pursuer of possessions. He stops at nothing to achieve his target of personal interest; he has no patience for destiny but rather always strive to make it happen. It is good to note the nature of OT literature in line with editorial intentions and use of forms and genres. Anderson (2011) gives his view of the book of Genesis and Jacob that though it portrays the character Jacob as a brazen trickster who deceives members of his family; his father Isaac, his brother Esau and his uncle Laban. At the same time Genesis depicts Jacob as Yahweh's chosen, from whom the entire people of Israel derive and for whom they are named. For Anderson Jacob character in the narrative as a concurrent and unabashed trickster as well

as Yahweh's preference represent a latent tension in the text. Therefore, the Abia Christian should note that changing a name in a hurry as a result of prescription by whomever, and for whatever reasons without a corresponding change in character of a believer is tantamount to religious aberration whether the expected material and spiritual breakthroughs come or not.

4.6 The aetiological significance of name-play in Genesis 32 for Abia State

Throughout the Jacobean narratives are catalogue of names, change of names, the meanings and reasons for such names of persons and places. Aetiological nomenclature is an indication that there is more to a name in ancient cultures than the mere mentioning of it as a sign of identification. In the ancient Greek and Roman socio-cultural milieus a name is used to distinguish between two things. This is not so in Jewish and Igbo world views where a name is used as a very significant reflection of ideas surrounding a person or thing so named. Concerning Igbo names, Ezekwu (2014) said, "The names are therefore given not only for identification but also to connote either success or failure for the child and his people. This is because names have power and people live out their names"(p.21). In the Jewish and African contexts the attention is more on the giver of the name than the bearer. For example, in Jacobean narrative we see Leah, the hated wife of Jacob naming her first son *Reuben* (meaning-'see a son'), the name has nothing directly to do with the baby boy, rather it reflects the situation Leah found herself (a hated wife) at the

time the son was born. In African Igbo culture, such a woman would have named her son *Nwaburuoke* (if the gift of a child' is from man). The silent rhetorical ending of the name is *Onye gara ekenyem?* (Who would have given me?). Suffice it all to say that the focus in African Igbo name is more on the giver of the name than the bearer of it.

The aetiological nomenclature prevalent in the Jacobean cycle began from the birth narrative (Gen. 25:19-34) where Esau was given his name because he came forth red and would later dwell in a region with red terrain called עֲדוֹם (Edom) after being outsmarted by his brother Jacob with a meal of red pottage. It continued to the naming of Jacob with aetiological explanation of the meaning as a supplanter and this he did to his father Isaac, his brother Esau and his uncle Laban. Other names given and assigned meanings in the Jacobean narrative are בֵּיתֵיָהוָה (House of God); פְּנֵי־אֱלֹהִים (Face of God) with the aetiological addendum “For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved” (Gen. 32:30). The major aetiological nomenclature in the Jacobean narrative for this work is the change of name from *Jacob* (Supplanter) to *Israel* (God strives) with the aetiological addendum, “For you have striven with God and with men, and have prevailed” (Gen. 32:28). Apart from those of the Israel's tribal ancestry who were named according to the circumstances surrounding their birth followed by aetiological explanations, the last chapter of the cycle are full of name changing drama. Ross (1983) said, “Aetiological motifs do occur in

general in the Bible, especially in Genesis which explains the beginning of many things” (p.19).

In Igbo cosmology, name is not just about identity or the person who bears the name. There is deeper meaning behind names which are relevant for socio-religious, economic, cultural and political history of the people. Eluwa (2008) said, “Names have deeper historical meaning” (p.661). Most significant in a name in African Igbo cosmology is the circumstances surrounding the person’s birth, the family condition and religious situation. Maduabum (2012) said, “Igbo names are complete expression, which are not only meaningful but reflect on certain experiences and circumstances that occurred during childbirth, human sojourn on earth, and also on social expectations” (p.1). Name therefore serves as a storage devise to enhance memory.

Among the African Igbo, as well as the Jews in the Old Testament as earlier pointed out, a name is more significant to the giver than the bearer. Names are not just given at random selection or by some guesswork. Names are carefully, thoughtfully and consciously chosen and given. Names reflect belief and world view of the Igbo, they at the same time show joy, sorrow, life, death, regrets, prospects and potentials. That is why to change a name for whatever reason in Igbo land must follow due process both formal and informal. The implication in throwing away a name involves doing away with some vital history which could help the present or future generation by arming them with

concrete information about their background. Goethe quoted by Maduabum (2012) was right to say thus: “A man’s name is not like a mantle, which merely hangs on him, and which one per-chance safely switch and pull, but a perfectly fitting garment, which, like the skin, has grown over him, at which one cannot rake and scrape without injuring the man himself” (p.1).

In the process of this work, the researcher discovered that there are various reasons why names are changed in the areas of study and not just religious reasons. Many individuals and families subscribe to change the name with which they were known due to sudden consciousness and quest to know their roots. In the case of *Umuadiele* in *Nsirimo* community, Umuahia South LGA of Abia state Nigeria, it was discovered that *Adiele* whose name they bear was only a son to *Ekwenye* one of the three ancestors from whom they descended, namely *Ekwenye*, *Iroanya* and *Amanze*. It happened that in those early years of inter-village incursions and survival of the fittest, *Adiele* was rich, strong and influential. This led all who were related to him including cousins to adopt his name as their surname to offer them coverage, passage and safety. E.C. Adiele (Personal communication, 3rd December, 2015) said that few years ago the descendants of the other two ancestors changed their names to *Umuiroanya* and *Umuamanze* as a result of clamour for ancestral root. They refuse to let their father’s name die.

There are people who change their names due to the large population of those bearing the compound names of their ancestors who do not want the name of their own great-grand fathers to be forgotten. Therefore, by way of Igbo philosophy of *Ahamefula* (let my name not go extinct); such people decide to adopt their direct grandfather's name. Onunwa (2012) observed that, "As society enlarges its scale, so do many cultural concepts get new dimensions, meanings, applications and interpretations (p.vi). As families expand, enlarge and multiply, the population increases and gives rise to the desire spreading out and disintegration. With time subsequent populations will keep relocating and migrating in search of land, space and better opportunities, so also new names of closer ancestors and fathers are borne by immediate children. This also accounts for some people who answer two surnames.

It is a common practise in this part of the globe that when a woman marries she would change her surname to that of the husband's surname. Some women in the present times add the name of the husband to their maiden names for official reasons. During the slave trade era, slaves who were captured or bought were named after their masters while they drop their original names. Some examples are the *Jajas* in Opobo, the *Cookeys*, the *Obomanus*, the *Epeles*, the *Urantas* and the like. This was the reason why two people answering the same surname could get married among the freed slaves. It also happened in the bible during the Babylonian exile (ca.586-538 B.C.). Daniel

and his Jewish comrades had their names changed as a sign of ownership because they were war captives. The recent case of *Ese Oruru*, a thirteen year old teenager from *Yenagoa* who was kidnapped by 12th August, 2015 and found at the palace of Emir of Kano Muhammadu Sanusi II already had her name changed to *Aisha Chuwas* as a mark of ownership before her rescue by 29th February, 2016.

Some people change their names for religious reason. Change of name for religious reasons is the problem of this research. The work is not against change of a name for religious reasons, but questions the rationale behind it when it is imposed on any people by an art of religious intimidation based on biblical references like the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32. Under normal circumstances when people change their faith, the next thing is baptism, with a baptismal name for the new convert. Nwosu quoted in Nmah (1993) agrees that, to become a Christian, the proselyte had to abandon his old ways mostly his culture and religion and to become a European in every way including abandoning his wives as a polygamist and renouncing his indigenous name for a European obviously at baptism. Today we see increasing cases of private preachers whose stock in trade is to condemn native names and tag them pagan, evil, fetish, and cause of misfortune; just to create opportunity to either prove how “man of God” they are and or increase their membership and pockets.

The acclaimed religious reasons for change of name are often initiated and carried out through visions, prophecies and conducting of deliverances. In the Scripture, there is hardly any example of change of name of human beings for religious reasons; it is either situational like the Old Testament Abraham and Sarah, or conventional like the New Testament Apostle Paul. The case of Jacobean narrative change of name in Genesis 32 remains aetiology. If change of name is all it takes to please God and succeed in life, then it is very easy to succeed, but this is not what the Scripture says. Obi (2012) warns that in religion, “Followers should deviate from the lazy thought of waiting for the Divine to solve all their problems with little or no effort of our own” (p.160). Sometimes somebody may set out to change his name for religious or spiritual reasons and end up with confusion tracing the family name. For example, Sam Onyekwere (Personal communication, 21st February, 2016) said that he discovered that his surname was a nickname of his great grandfather and as he could not trace his surname, he was confused and was forced to adopt his second name *Onyekwere* as surname since the man of God prescribed change of name as way out of his predicaments in life.

Whatever be the reason for change of names among Igbo people, this work posits that though it offers a momentary emotional relief, it most often result to mental imperialism. The colonial masters and the early missionaries succeeded in brainwashing our people to the effect that anything originating

from Blackman's culture is evil, satanic and ungodly. Yet most of cultural artefacts in most villages today are missing. For instance, the famous '*Ikoru of Nsirimo*' (a superlative Giant Wooden Gong, the sound of which could be heard at over ten kilometres away and only beaten at very rare serious and sensitive cultural occasions) got missing. The reason is that the same Whiteman that condemned such cultures, turned around and connived with some unscrupulous indigenes to steal them, and they are ready to pay any amount of money. It is in the light of such move to stigmatise whatever originates from us among us that this radical prescription of change of native names most likely originated.

However, as they preach us out of our rich cultural background and values, deliberately estranging us from our heritage and natural environment, telling us how obnoxious they are, they turn around and buy them off at all cost and carry them to their country for their museum and other purposes. Many villages in Igbo land today had such experience of losing their rich artefacts mysteriously, which later find their ways into the Whiteman's museum. Up till Friday the 8th day of April, 2016 as enlightened as we think we are, a popular Magic FM Radio, Aba programme (People and Politics) presenters Anastasia and Peter Onovo taunted some roads in Aba which bear Igbo names like 'Obohia' Road, 'Ngwa' Road et cetera, and tagging the other Roads named after the English like Kent, Milverton, Crowther et cetera as loving, beautiful and

appealing. This is the height of mental colonialism; in such a public widely broadcasted program.

Meanwhile, '*Obohia*' is from the root word '*Ohia*' which means 'bush' which is the name of one time president of USA. It is however, the same spirit and reason behind some independent preachers who try to have their way by hiding behind religious sentiments to change their clients' native names without taking time to investigate the significance of such names to their history. Even though Ezekwu (2014) believes that names carry powers and influences in Igbo ideology, which is supposed to be from a religious point of view based on faith and belief without which otherwise this study suggests caution, he emphasises that a name is more than mere mark identity thus, "I have come to realise that the name in Igbo culture is more than a tag or a badge of identity, a record, and even a prayer; it is also an expression of faith, belief, emotion and battles" (p.3). Ezekwu continued to stress that the Igbo does not just give a name to a child for fun, the names are given with reasons expressing a feeling or a situation of past, present or future. In other words, a name contains both history and hope of the people; therefore, any move to tamper with name should be done with consensus and for obvious reasons.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF GENESIS 32 AETIOLOGY TO ABIA STATE: A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

In order to appreciate the beautiful literary art evident in the OT and particularly in the Jacobean narratives, there is need to consider it under aetiological discourse which we shall do in this segment using salient aetiological indices within the narratives. In this discourse, the study shall identify some tools or yardsticks with which the Jacobean narrative is measured or appraised. Hinson (1990) observed that, “when we study the written records of Israel we must take into account all that we can discover of the reasons why the story is recorded in the fashion we have it” (p.21). Four basic tools are hereby deployed to discourse the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 within the framework of the patriarchal cycle.

5.1 Supremacy and Sovereignty of God (אלהים) over nature and tradition in Jacobean story and Abia state

God is the author of life and overrules human customs and traditions. He conserves the right to upturn such laws and as well command nature for his purpose. He could destroy the world with the deluge, thwart human plans by confusion of tongue, and harden the heart of Pharaoh in order to demonstrate his sovereignty by delivering his people with strong hands. The theological

ideology of Yahweh's supremacy and sovereignty also reflects in the Jacobean narrative aetiology of Genesis 32 where, there is a twist of fate preferring the younger (Jacob) to the elder (Esau). Some of such cultures are borrowed from Israelite neighbours. Falwall (1982) said, "Nuzi texts showed that both at Nuzi and among patriarchal clans, a final disposition by the head of household had a solid legal standing and that the eldest son could be appointed to enjoy such a status" (p.71). Falwall is right even though in *Nuzi* tablets as well as in Genesis 27 there is no record of oral wills or evidence of arbitrary determination of birthright and paternal blessings. It goes on to show that it is neither Jacob nor Esau and not even the author or the reader, but it is all about God's will who on his own raises up one and brings down another. This aetiology explains why Israel is preferred to other nations of the earth including other direct descendants of Abraham.

In the narrative, God imbued Jacob with the power, the Spirit and the courage to do what he was not able to do before and to desist from mundane practices that made him unacceptable before God and before man. This fact is indicated in the Bethel experience (Gen. 28:10ff) where God on his own initiated a relationship with a trick star (Jacob) and the protagonist of narrative who was on the run from his angry brother (Esau) who he supplanted in two consecutive occasions (Gen.27-36) without remorse. The aetiological implication is that God can still make use of us despite us; therefore, man has no

reason to feel too important or outright useless, his position and disposition notwithstanding. Among the Igbo and the Jews, the position of the first son is so respected traditionally that he receives a double portion of the father's inheritance. However, most often any of the younger ones could be said to be more prosperous and influential just as in the Jacobean narrative which is interpreted as an art of God. There is a careful demonstration of the birth right struggle in the patriarchal lineage through domestic intrigue and rivalry which is made possible through endogamy similar to what obtains the in Abia state-Nigeria as discussed below.

5.1.1 Domestic intrigue and rivalry in Patriarchal narratives: Interpretation for Abia state

The Pentateuch is saturated with a cycle of domestic struggles and rivalries. This is evident in the killing of Abel by his brother Cain. It could also be observed in the Patriarchal cycle, first from the house of Abraham which led to the ejection of Hagar the slave girl. Between Jacob and Esau was another struggle and rivalry, their parents Isaac and Rebekah each struggled to favour a cherished son. Within the household of Jacob was another case of struggle and rivalry between Leah and Rachael. There was another case of struggle and rivalry between the sons of Jacob with Joseph on one side against his elder brothers on another side. The cycle of domestic struggle and rivalry also extended to Moses and his siblings Aaron and Miriam. The editors used the

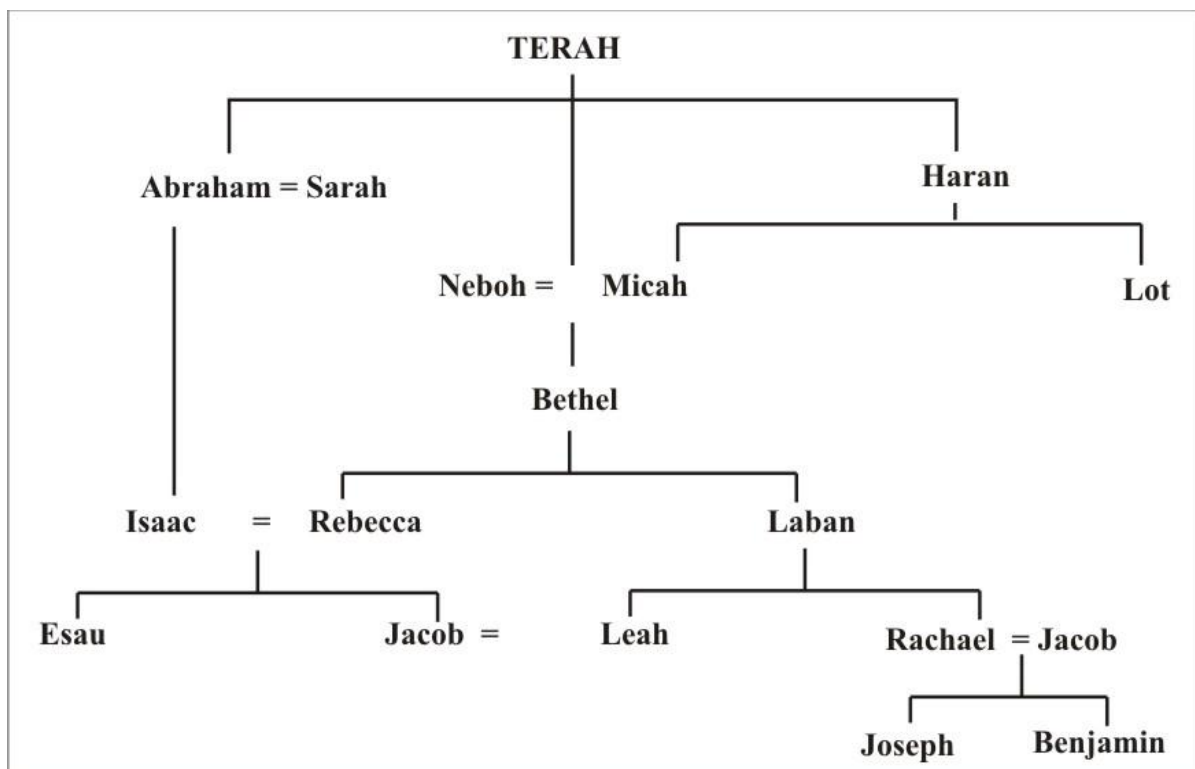
incidents to show how weak and frail man could be in character and yet they are of the chosen patriarchal lineage, it is not about the righteousness of man but it is God's mercy.

There is the other side of the editorial choice of struggles and intrigues within the Patriarchal cycle. The FC from time has recorded uncountable events of conflicts. The basic reason is economic mingled with religion, culture and perhaps sovereignty. The major issue is the strategic location of the land which boosted trade, commerce and agriculture. The younger generations after exile demonstrated some traits of curiosity by wanting to know the origin of all the ensuing squabbles. The custodians of history took time to devise a means of responding to the inquiries by using literary forms and styles. The emphasis is that the various groups and tribes which now hunt against each other began as a family, whether they are descendants of Ammon, Moab, Edom or Israel. They are also not to be discouraged because whatever they see started as a domestic intrigue and rivalry. Therefore, it behoves the younger, wiser regenerate generation to right the wrongs of the past and adopt love, tolerance and brotherhood believing that Yahweh is sovereign.

The Abia state Christian should as well learn that any interpretation given to the Sacred Book that considers less the peace, love and harmony of the people, for example the change of name enterprise should be properly weighed.

5.1.2 The role of endogamy in the Jacobean narratives and Abia state experience

Endogamy is a form of marriage whereby people are permitted to marry within the family cycle. This type of marital arrangement form another cycle of events in the Pentateuch, and Patriarchal cycle in particular. There is yet no general agreement as to from where Cain married. But it is obvious that Abraham married Sara his cousin. The same way Rachael was a cousin to her husband Isaac. Jacob also married his two cousins Leah and Rachael. The TLB has this to say, “Meanwhile, Abraham married his half-sister Sarai, while his brother Nahor married their orphaned niece Milcah, who was the daughter of their brother Haran” (11:29). The cycle of endogamy makes Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 an integral part of a larger patriarchal cycle. The following diagram explains Patriarchal endogamy more.



From the above diagram it is obvious that most of the Patriarchs married from blood related families. They are people of the same ancestral lineage and faith. In each case of barren situation the theological intention of the editor is expressed through husband who will always make reference to God, and sometimes praying for his wife. Jacob used a question in his own case thus, “Am I God that gives children”? At the end of each case Yahweh is shown as one who has power to make barren and to open the womb. Sara was reported to be barren before God miraculously gave her Isaac after insisting that the legitimate heir would come from her womb, despite her alternative arrangement with Hagar. Whereas Sara had her baby at the age of ninety, twenty-five years after the promise as she was already married to Abram before his call; Rebekah had her twins after being barren for twenty-years, and Rachael was also barren before she gave birth to complete the cycle. Man is portrayed weak in trivial issues of life and only succeed by the act of divine mercy. Even though man has been given the authority to multiply and fill the earth, yet the recognition role of Yahweh as the ultimate authority is required. This view is in consonance with Erhard Blum’s observation of editorial ancestral (*toledoth* formula) arrangement whereby divine will hinges around and within a family lineage and expressed through generational succession.

Jacobean narratives serve as extensions of Patriarchal tradition which adopts particular cycle of themes. With Abraham it was all about blessing,

offspring, and land. Each narrative segment adds a new twist in that the Abraham cycle dealt with fertility and offspring via the father-to son relationship. The Jacob cycle revolves around brother-to-brother relationship within the promise. In the case of Igbo people, an individual is identified by his family or compound name, and it generally a taboo to nurse erotic feelings for a blood relation, much more getting married. The later history of Israel shows that Jew is not to marry a close blood relation. In Igbo land names help to trace people's descent, with the recent development of rapid change of names here and there, it is possible that this practise would in very recent future witness a radical violation. The Patriarchal narrative cycle is not intended to be an example for emulation rather; the narrator was after the explanation of causation and origination.

5.2 Pre-editorial narrative roots to the aetiology of Genesis 32: a guide to

Religious preachers in Abia state

One feature common with OT authorship is the ability to link narratives together. Most often the narratives are squeezed in a way that it will only take a Bible scholar to discern the link. The Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 aetiology is a product of editorial device rooted in many other narratives to be discussed hereunder. The various narrative concepts are to be discussed with reference to

Igbo people of Abia state extraction. However, when Igbo people are mentioned, Abia state is implied.

5.2.1 The Jacobean Bethel encounter and Genesis 32 aetiology for Abia State Christians

Bethel (בֵּית-אֵל) was a very strategic location in the Old Testament times that was significant in terms of socio-religious and commercial life of the people. Springs were abundant to enhance the fertility of the soil, and the environment very conducive and attractive for recreational activities even as far back as 3200 B.C. In a very artistic literary style, the author of the Jacobean narrative saw this all important strategic centre as a place so serene for meditation, comfort and relaxation for the fugitive Jacob. The run-away sinner was overburdened along his unpredictable journey; intermittently confronted in his inner contemplative imagination of how his father felt on noticing he played a hard trick on him and the curse of misleading a blind man in Israel (Deut. 27:18). He was also burdened as he journeyed and reflected with mixed feelings on the state of his beloved mother who spearheaded the mischief.

Fredericks (2004) observed that, “extensive fortification of Bethel came after this patriarchal period” (p.191). During the conquest, Bethel was taken along with Ai. After the division of the kingdom Bethel became a part of the Northern kingdom (1 Chron.13:19). Geographically, Bethel is situated at the inter section of the main north–south road through the hill country and the main

road from Jericho to the coastal plain. It was a passage for both local and international travels. The location became a strategic and popular border of the two at the division of the kingdom. This central position offered Bethel a commercial advantage. Today the village of *Beitin* lie on the ruins of Bethel. The narrative surrounding Bethel is an aetiological device to explain how Israel came to occupy Bethel, an effort to assign the place a legal religious and historical signature.

The history of Judaism would be incomplete without Bethel, and there is no better way to explain it except to link it to the patriarchal era and, especially the man Jacob (יַעֲקֹב) in whose life story lies the origin of the name they bear Israel (יִשְׂרָאֵל). The author carefully used the Jacobean narrative to show the religious significance of Bethel as the name explains; hence 'בֵּית' (house) and 'אֵל' (God) which is a shortened form of (אֱלֹהִים) meaning 'God' or 'god' (distinguished by translators as 'LORD' or 'lord' giving rise to 'בֵּית-אֵל' (House of God) which is rendered as a proper noun with no gender, no number and no state (Gen. 28:19). It is an aetiological literary device because the name was assigned by the narrator in order to explain the origin of the importance of this historical location whose name prior to this time was *Luz* (לִזְיָהוּ). Bethel fell under the northern kingdom after the division and became notorious when Jeroboam established a rival sanctuary there with a golden calf to discourage his people from travelling south to Jerusalem (1Kings 13:1-32; 2Kings 10:29). Bethel was

therefore denounced as idolatrous by the prophets (Hos.10:15; Jer.48:13), many times it was destroyed at a time by Assyria (722 B.C.) but rose again during the Hellenistic and Roman periods and in the Middle Ages, it is the present day Beitin. The religious importance of Bethel was a huge monumental attraction for the building of the aetiology in Jacobean cycle narration.

5.2.2 Death-bed blessings tradition in the Patriarchal era and Igbo people

Death-bed blessing was a culture among the Nuzi who were neighbours to Israel. This practice was contained in the Nuzi tablets. It is a situation whereby a dying old man would invite his family members to pronounce final blessings upon them before he dies according to what he felt concerning each of them. This was done by Abraham to Isaac who in turn did same to Jacob. Jacob also blessed his children and grandchildren before his death (Gen.49:1ff.), and Joseph did so too instructing that his bones be carried up to Canaan (Gen. 50:25).

Among the Igbo people death-bed blessing is practised whereby an aged dying man or woman gathers the children and grandchildren as the case maybe for final blessings. The last words that come out of the aged dying person are regarded as high and powerful one; hence he is seen as partly man and partly spirit. The elder has a name for all his children, and those names carry the history and encounters of his life and upon such names he pronounces the

blessings. Therefore, for somebody to just suddenly throw the name away under whatever guise is provoking and irritating to those who value such names. So then, such people will need consultations and calculated approach for conviction if the purpose of the new name must be achieved.

5.2.3 Formalisation of Patriarchal Covenant blessing among the Jews and the lesson for Igbo people

The records of divine encounter with covenant formalisation is all over the Pentateuch and especially in the Jacobean narrative. Each episode is usually followed by a promise from God and acceptance by the recipient through worship with the erection of an altar as a landmark. This practise is recurrent all through the Pentateuch right from Genesis. Noah had a divine encounter and confirmation of covenant blessing. The stability of the earth and its seasons was promised with the rainbow as the sign, and Noah erected an altar as a landmark. Thus, “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease” (8:22). At the Oak of Mamre Abraham had his own encounter with obedience as a condition (Gen.12:1-3), thus:

Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you; and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves (RSV).

Abraham also erected an altar, a multitude of children and a particular land mass “כְּנָעַן” (Canaan) were the signs. Isaac had his own encounters at *Shechem* שְׁכֶם (Gen.26:3, 4) and *Beer-Sheba* (בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע) as covenant extension from his father with obedience to God as a condition thus, “I am the God of Abraham your father; fear not, for I am with you and will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham’s sake” (Gen.26:24). Thereafter, Isaac erected an altar and pitched his tent as a landmark. Jacob had his own encounters at *Shechem* and at *Bethel* confirming the Abrahamic covenant with the promise of a land thus, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land which you lie I will give to you and to your descendants” (Gen.28:13). Jacob also as well erected an altar as a landmark. The Jacobean narrative ended with Jacob and his father in law (maternal uncle) Laban erecting an altar of witness against each other at Gilead (Gen.31:47). Lasor (1985) observed that,

God was the patron deity of the Patriarch’s clan, as clearly seen in Genesis 31:36-55, where Jacob swears by the kinsman or fear of Isaac, and Laban by the God of Nahor. This terminology has close parallel in the Cappadocia and Mari texts as well as in Arabic and Aramean texts from the early Christian centuries (p.110).

The invoking of clan deity with reference to the covenant agreement is a common practise within the patriarchal narrative cycle. It is used in Genesis 28

narrative to formalise the covenant blessing on Jacob in preparation to the encounter in Genesis 32 aetiology.

In Abia state of Igbo land the practise of primogeniture is a very strong one. The firstborn male is given a double inheritance of the family estate. Originally it is expected that the first son will take care the widowed mother and would have helped in raising the younger siblings who were too young at the demise of their father. These days many families are in disarray because after a younger son bears the responsibilities at the end the first son would still be given the lion share. The elders who are in a fraternity called *Ndi isi opara* (Union of first sons) will justify it with a proverb meant to protect their member saying, “Onye aka puru lie nna ya obughi di opara gburu ya” meaning that “Anyone who is buoyant enough should bear the burial expenditure of the father’s, the first son did not kill him”. However, just as the Jacobean narrative, sometimes for whatever reason some fathers regards any son of their choice as the major trustee of their estate while alive depending on relationship. At his death the problem will linger in the family just as it lingered between Jacob and Esau. At the end of the day divine choice must prevail, God is not subject to human tradition and will have mercy on which he wills over the order seniority notwithstanding.

5.3 Non-Israelite all inclusive divine master-plan in Jacobean narrative and hospitality among Igbo people of Abia state

It is clear from the Jacobean story that the choice of one is the choice of all. Many other OT post-exilic Writings like the books of Job and Jonah testify to the Jewish ideology of inclusivism. Apart from the poor and the widow and perhaps slaves, strangers are another set of people Yahweh warned Israel to care for; the major reason is that their forefathers were strangers in the land of Egypt, hence; “You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt”. In fact, the story of Abraham’s hospitality to the three strangers (angels) by the oaks of *Mamre* and the blessing that came with the hosting remains a historical monument among the Jews (Gen. 18:1-15). In Genesis chapter 19 Lot showed hospitality to strangers and save his life and his family from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. This culture was prescribed for emulation by the NT Jewish Christians by the writer of the book of Hebrews 13:2 “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares”. And the favour of one is for the sake of many. This fact spreads all through the Bible.

In Genesis 50:19-20 it is said “But Joseph said to them; fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive; as they are today”. Also in Esther 4:14 Mordecai had admonished Queen Esther thus, “And

who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this? It is also clear that the parable of the shady plant in the book of Jonah (4:6ff) indicate divine master plan for salvation of all.

The gospel of Luke and Acts of the Apostles were written for the inclusive purpose of God for the salvation of the entire human race. John 1:12 states “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God”. In Acts 10:34 Peter opened his mouth and said, “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him”. Christ also taught that welcoming strangers will be one of the qualifications for entering the kingdom of God (Matt. 25:35). Therefore, the narrative in the Jacobean cycle concerning the upgrading of the statutes and inclusion of slave girls *Bilha* and *Zilpha* into the covenant family of Israel as displayed by Jacob’s family census in Genesis 32:22 is a deliberate editorial art to establish the fact that Yahweh is the sovereign Lord. The slave girls who were attached to an Israelite family became legitimate members of the household. This tradition was common with the people of *Nuzi* in the north-east of the Holy land and could have attracted the fancy of the Jews. The presence of the maids was used to close a gap and to save a situation that would have hampered a trend despite the later developments that warranted their mistresses having their own children. Despite that the RSV still referred to them as maids, their children were included as

legitimate, the purpose is to retain the inclusive history of the Jews. This is true because Genesis 30:4&9 already confirm that Rachel and Leah *Bilhah* and *Zilpah* their maids to their husband as wives. Offspring raised through them which constituted the corpus of Israelite tribal ancestry serves as a clear aetiological reflection of an inclusive and all embracing agenda of Yahweh for the salvation of the entire humanity.

Aetiological narratives were relevant with reference to an attack against the post-exilic Ezra's exclusive reformation agenda where he enforced divorce to marriages with non-Israelites (Ezra 10:1-5) and a condemnation of Jonah's indignant attitude when the people of Assyria repented to escape the wrath of God. Lasor (1985) remarks that,

The transition from election to the historical realisation of God's covenant people, however, is not simple, historically or theologically, as the Genesis account affirms. Tensions arise out of the nature of humankind vis-à-vis the sovereign God. While evident in all biblical character, these tensions are most dramatic in the life of Jacob (p.115).

When it comes to showing hospitality, the Igbo people of Abia state are excellent. This is evident in their saying, *O huru obia gbawa nkwa* that is "those who rejoice at the site of a visitor (s)". Sometimes visitors who have nowhere to go or call a home are given portions of land to settle. But this is not to be taken for granted, hence they also say, *O biara ngaonye abiagbulam* meaning, "May my visitor not be a threat to me". The history is always retained in the names they give such a group for posterity, and that is why they will say, Arusi

kpakaria nganga agwa ya osisi eji pia ya” meaning that, “If somebody becomes too arrogant, he will be told his helpless past”. However, Igbo people are known for their hospitality and generosity. They welcome a visitor with *Oji* (kola nuts) or *Nzu* (White clay-chalk) which is formally presented and prayers offered before it is eaten. Sometimes they will give you *Oji ruo ulo* that is an extra kola nut for take home so that when your people ask you it will be an evidence of your journey. The worst regret of an Igbo man is that he has a visitor and has no kola available to welcome him, he will keep apologising for as long as he remembers it. This signifies clean or broad heart, love, warm reception, care, brotherhood, fraternity and communion. The idea of practical inclusion of diverse component that make up Nigeria has remained a key issue in the national polity. During the Golden Jubilee Conference of the Nigerian Association of Law Teachers at UNIZIK, Awka, the acting president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as reported by Agbakwuru (2017) remarked that the upsurge in agitations in the country is the failure of the State to create an inclusive society under the existing constitutional arrangements to guarantee the security of lives, livelihoods and liberties by the agencies saddled with the responsibilities of maintaining Law and order. A closer study of Abia hospitality however, could offer a helping hand of Nigeria’s diversity problem. This requires urgent attention especially now that many countries are fast repatriating Nigerian citizens abroad coupled with the already population explosion.

In Abia state, and all through Igbo land there are cases of families who traced their descent far away from where they grew and took as their homes. This practise is acceptable because when the atmosphere is hot in one location one can relocate for the sake of peace and gets hospitality from another part of Igbo land he finds space. At a point many people trace their roots through the names they answer which carry the history of the exodus of their forefathers

from their place of origin. When they trace the place the people will carry out investigations of which names they bear supply most of the needed information. At the end of the day, such people are received back home with a big ceremony and are given back whatever all traceable properties of their fathers who may not be alive. Two years ago, I personally led a foundation of the house of Mr Andrew Uzodinma at *Uvuru Mbaise* at the trace of their descent through the history conveyed in a name. If such names were change without proper procedure the information would forever be lost, this is why this study advocates strongly for care to be taken in the change of name crusade around Abia state-Nigeria and beyond. Abia state people are magnanimous and hospitable to strangers, how much more their own blood who returned from Diaspora.

5.4 Historical roots of Israel inherent in the aetiology of Genesis 32 and Ancestral ideology in Abia state

The ultimate intention behind the aetiological narrative in Genesis 32 is to root the name of Israel into historical shrines. The story of origin will help not only to boost the pride of future generations of the Jewish nation, but it will as well strengthen their claim of ownership of the geographical location they already occupy in the Ancient Near East (ANE), and precisely the Fertile Crescent (FC). This timely editorial disposition was to justify the Jewish massive re-occupation of the land over a thousand years later, beginning from 1948 which is currently a global political concern, considering constant agitations by the Palestinians. However, despite the editorial mastermind of the

Jacobean narratives, it is generally clear that both in Igbo and Jewish cultures, life has more meaning when one traces his root or place of origin.

In Igbo culture any person without clear traceable roots is cajoled with the term *Efulufu* or *efekefe* which means, “One who is hanging” or “One without traceable roots”. No Igbo person would wish to have such identity, hence the need to trace origin which names serve as a major vessel. Many Igbo people were able to trace their way back to their communities and families after the first and second world wars as well as the Nigeria –Biafra civil war. As this project is going, I came across the Bende family in Umuoke, Umuako-Nsirimo in Umuahia south of Abia state where the children of the fourth generation of a man sold during the slave trade just traced their roots and are building their family house and people are celebrating them. As soon as an Igbo person is well to do, his next agenda is to trace his roots no matter where he is. The people believe that it is a shame for the head of a true son of the soil to get lost in a strange land. This is also true of the Jews, in the OT we read about people like Joseph instruction their survivors to take along their whenever they go back to their land. The understanding as serious as mapping out graves of family members whose way about could not be traced after a very long time when there is no hope that they are alive wherever they may be. In my station at Osusu-Aba, a young man brought to me documents that a northern governor signed to release a young man from Enugu state who had a problem with an

Alhaji during his youth service and was locked up and forgotten. After over ten years of no traces of the youth copper by the parents conducted his burial and had a grave after him because he was the first graduate of the village. The young man who came to me encountered the ex-copper in the prison and took his message to his people. The day he finally traced the parents they did not believe their son was still alive, they even showed him the boy's grave. The young man came for prayers so that the authorities will release the young man by those in authority even after the governor signed for his release because that particular governor is was no more on seat. Assuming the villages and families hurriedly changed their names for whatever reasons before these incidents, it would have been more difficult for them to trace their roots.

Such roots are preserved in names and certain stories which existed first as oral tales and passed from one generation to another who tell and retell them to suit each era of the believing community. Maduabum (2012) said, "Apart from identifying the individual, a name also has significant traditional and historical meanings" (p.1). Along the process, it becomes difficult to separate the people, their life and identity as a nation from the tales. From those tales traditions evolve. The experience of war, migration and natural disasters could interfere with the process of history. This was the case of Israel within the exilic and post-exilic periods which made the editors to come up with alternatives like the Jacobean narrative cycle, to explain some traditions and cultures with

particular reference to the origin of the name *Israel* which they bear. The devastation that accompanied the exile to Babylon (586 B.C), the dying away of the bearers of the tales and the destruction of the temple made documentation necessary. The editors made use of aetiology as one of the literary tools for narration and documentation. The devastating effect of the Nigeria – Biafra war on the Igbo nation like the Jewish exile cannot be overemphasized, I was born during the war and narrowly escaped death at birth with my mother during the war and my father named me Alexander (The Great) which means, “God helps or helper of man”. The Nigeria-Biafra civil war gave rise to such names as *Osonduagwuike* which is shortened as just *Osondu* which means, “No slacking in a survival race”. Similarly, the difficulty of Israel’s re-integration into the ANE after the exile parallels the near impossible re-integration of Igbo people into Nigerian polity after almost five decades of the civil war.

The disparities in telling and retelling a story become more complex when the story passes from oral stage to written stage. It becomes more complicated with passage of time, and when it is interpreted in a different world of meaning. This is the case with many written texts, including the Old Testament and, particularly the Pentateuch where the Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 are situated. The Old Testament as the Scripture to both Judaism and Christianity has witnessed a lot of complexities due to processes of preservation and documentation coupled with time and location. Okwueze (2008) said,

“When literature has passed from one language into scores of others and has continued to wield an immense influence through the authoritative place it occupies in two religions, namely Judaism and Christianity, the history becomes uncommonly complex and fascinating” (p.237). The difficulty in understanding the Old Testament is partly because many people read it for various reasons and from different backgrounds and interests, this is evident among some religious preachers in Abia state who interpret Genesis 32 as a command for change of names of persons and communities.

More so, the Old Testament is designed as a book of religion and faith rather than history. This is observable in the Jacobean narrative cycle from the birth story of Jacob in Canaan to his return from Haran. Bandstra (2011) said that as with Abraham cycle, so too with the Jacob’s cycle, the story also involves a good deal of travel. The Jacob cycle finds a parallel with the Abrahamic narrative in the rivalry of the favoured sons, Ishmael and Isaac, though the earlier rivalry was played out more by the mother. Jacob’s maturation involves a multistage journey necessitated by his own deceptions and built around significant encounters with the deity. The editors made use of aetiology instead of history as some modern preachers are yet to appreciate. Alter (1990) said,

The Hebrew Bible, though it includes some of the most extraordinary narratives poems in the western literary tradition

reminds us that literature is not entirely limited to story and poem, that the coldest catalogue and the driest aetiology may be an effective subsidiary instrument of literary expression (p.16).

Alter has tried to clear the air concerning the impression in various circles that reading the Bible in the prism of literature is forbidden or unbiblical; hence the Bible writers and editors themselves deployed literary styles, forms and genres like aetiology to push their messages across.

5.4.1 Jacob's encounter with Laban and law of retributive justice among Igbo people of Abia state

The house of Laban actually offers the peak of Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32. It is the final destination of the fugitive, the formation of his family and the origin of the twelve tribes of Israel. The journey of Jacob to Laban's house for a wife completes the larger patriarchal cycle in chapter twenty-four where Abraham, the grandfather sent his chief servant to the country of his kindred in Mesopotamia to get a wife for Isaac. Rebekah, Jacob's mother was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor Abraham's brother. Therefore, Laban was Rebekah's half-brother and grandson of Nahor. From the trace, Isaac's wife Rebekah was actually his cousin. This marital system was allowed at that time to retain wealth within the lineage and to insure the sanctity of blood relationship. The same practise is observed in some parts of Abia north who prefer matrilineal to the common paternal form marriage and women inherit landed property from their fathers, though it keeps reducing by the day. Traditionally, Igbo people ask questions before contracting a marriage to

ascertain if the prospective wife or husband comes from a lineage of pure blood, devoid of theft history or any questionable character, early mortality, barrenness or deadly disease apart from the dreaded *osu* caste syndrome. Jacob's journey to Haran is part of editorial expression of an aetiological device to explain how the nomadic group that left Mesopotamia through the call of Abraham (now Jacob's group) were joined together again with their kindred (now Rachel's group) after moving up and down round the region for about two centuries.

The most important lesson of Jacob's encounter with Laban is the issue of retribution. The Igbo people believe in the law of retributive justice. It is a situation whereby one lives to reap whatever evil he commits against his fellow human being. They believe that reward is divine. This means that no one is permitted to take laws into his hands by plotting revenge. If it is among the Igbo people, the treatment given to Jacob by Laban will be interpreted as a reward for the wrongs he did to his brother Esau and his aged father Isaac. This is why this study advocates caution in the change of name trend in Abia state hence some traditional names convey the traditional belief of which does not contradict the Gospel. The two issues involved here are vengeance and reward. This understanding is expressed both in the OT and NT; the Bible says, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord" (Lev.19:18; Rom. 12: 19). Likewise, among the Igbo people it is believed that *Chukwu* (Almighty) can avenge for the innocent and helpless. This belief is expressed in some names

like *Chinualumogu* meaning “May God fight or avenge for me”. We know that this is the full meaning of the popular author and icon *Chinua Achebe* of blessed memory. When you ask such people they will tell you the history behind such names, and no well meaning people or community plays with their historical past. Some others bear names like *Chinasaokwu* “God will speak for me”, *Chinazom* or *Chinagorom* meaning “God is my defender” and so many others. When it comes to reward for every action or inaction of man the Bible Job 4:8; Proverbs 11:18 and Galatians 6:7 emphasize that everyone will definitely reap what he sows. In the same vein, among the Igbo people such names and sayings exist which indicate reward or nemeses. Such names like *Chinweikpe* meaning “God is the judge”, *Chinweugwo* or *Chijiugwolu* meaning, “To God belongs reward”. It is ideal to mention again that various circumstances warrant the coinages of such names and such situations are as important to the people as life itself. There are also such sayings as, *Ihe onye metara ya buru* meaning that, “Everybody is responsible for his actions” and proverbs like *Isi kota ebu o gbaa ya* meaning, “The head that hits the hive of gnats will receive the stings”.

Therefore, it is obvious that among both Jews and Igbo people human characters are guided by good or bad rewards and the most veritable tool for expressing such beliefs, ideologies and virtues is through the names they bear. This is why this study posits that peoples and community names should not

always be changed in a hurry without proper documentations to accommodate the reason behind such names which is part of their history.

5.4.2 The rape and genocide at Shechem: a post-penu'el Jacob example for Abia state Christians

Shechem (שֶׁכֶם), which means ‘shoulder’ or ‘back’ as a location lies in the slope of the hill country Ephraim on mount *Ebal*, in the north central Palestine. It was the first capital city of the North after the division of the kingdom (1 Kings 12). The first mention of Shechem in the Old Testament is in connection with Abram’s arrival in Canaan (Gen. 12:6-7). Upon his return from *Paddan’aram* and after the encounter with Esau, Jacob settled at Shechem and purchased a land portion from the sons of *Hamor*. It was in Shechem that Dinah the daughter of Jacob by Leah was raped. In the narrative, there seems to be a literary design whereby the damsel was raped and her name Dinah (דִּינָה) meaning ‘injustice’ suits the occasion. The Hebrew, *Laqah* (לָקַח) an imperfect third person’s verb shows that there is the use of force against the helpless and naïve girl. The injustice could be the forceful defiling of the innocent damsel, or the coarse revenge by Simeon and Levi her direct siblings which resulted to genocide against the people of Shechem. The Hebrew ‘אָטַף’ used in Gen.34:5 means “to be defiled” or ‘unclean’, that is, “a disgraceful treatment”.

In Genesis 34:7 the sons of Jacob were indignant over the act because for them Shechem, “he had wrought folly in Israel, and such a thing ought not to be

done”(Gen.34:7). The word *Nebala* (נְבָלָה) rendered as a common noun, feminine, singular and absolute literally means folly (foolishness), ‘senselessness’ or ‘disgrace’. It indicates shameful, vile, senseless and immoral act. Yates (1988) observes that, “to Jacob and his sons, Shechem’s deed was an act of grave immorality, and outrage against decency and family honour” (p.37). The most painful aspect of the offense was that an uncircumcised foreigner lay with a member of the covenant family, and circumcision became the bait to lure the people of Shechem to destruction (34:17). The trick played on the Shechemites by Simeon and Levi contrary to the desire of their changed father Jacob was like a set back to his past unfashionable lifestyle. The narrative serves as aetiology to explain how Jacob came to dwell in Shechem by purchasing a piece of land. Shechem, which was the first capital of the northern kingdom, therefore became a memory of reproach to Israel, a way of expressing displeasure for the divided people of God expressed by the author.

Among the Igbo people and Abia state in particular, it is forbidden to defile a girl you are not married to or in some places betrothed, if it happens there are penalties of either marrying the girl or costly compensation to her and her family. It is forbidden to lie with a woman (on a bare floor) in the wild, this also attracts heavy repercussions including appeasing the *gods* (‘Ala’goddess). It is a more serious crime to rape a girl or a woman; this is seen as a very heinous offence and in fact a taboo. Such abominable act attracts a heavy

penalty from the culprit and the family including appeasing the *gods* of the land as prescribed by the *eze mmuo* (chief priest). This is still the case till date despite Christianity, modernity and globalization. Therefore, what the son of Hamor the Hivite did to Dinah daughter of Jacob is a serious offence even in Abia state. But the way and manner Simeon and Levi her brothers handled it by carrying out genocide against the people of Shechem amounts to revenge which is not a good example for the Christian. More so, this incident is one occasion in Jacobean narratives with clear indication of post-*Penu'el* changed character of the person of Jacob. In Genesis 34:5 Jacob heard about the ugly incident and unlike him, a gentle and amicable approach to resolving the issue was better than genocide. Despite his fear of insecurity in verse 30 which is another sign of selfishness, there is a lesson to the people who have suffered all manners of ill treatments and victimisation due to the conflicts raised by change of name in Abia state, dialogue and peaceful reconciliation remains the best option. Change of name must be accompanied by a change in character, if any of them should precede the other it should be change of character.

5.5 The effect of Genesis 32 aetiology and name change controversy in Abia State

Any meaningful change must involve an action, and action stimulates reaction. The change of name controversy in Abia State has both Positive effect and Negative effects. The outcome of the change not-withstanding, Igbo people

and particularly of Abia state extraction take their names very seriously. The names they bear contain their history, economy, culture, and understanding of life; their future hope and expectations, as well as their religious beliefs. The attitude and relationship of the Igbo toward God is evident in the names he call God which is synonymous with that of the Jews from the OT. Their encounter with God at various points in his history influences how they refer to him. Ikomi (1996) said, “The level of my conformity to God is proportional to my knowledge of Him” (p.4). This view agrees with the various names with which both the Igbo people and Jews refer to God. For the Jew he is *El-Shaddai* (Gen.49:24; Ps.132:2,5) which means “God Almighty” or “The mighty One of Jacob” while the Igbo sees him as *Chukwu* meaning “The Big/Almighty God” or “*Chineke Nna anyi ha*” that is “God of our fathers/ancestors”.

Another name is *Elohim* (Gen. 17:7, Jer.31:33) which means “God Creator, Mighty, Strong which in Igbo is “*Chukwu Okike or Chukwu Dike*”. As the Jews call him *El-Shalom* (Judg. 6:24) the Igbo call him *Chukwu-udo*. While the Jews call him *El-Shammah* (Ezek.48:35) which means “The ever present or Omniscient God” the Igbo call him *Chukwuabiana* or *Chukwuma (zuru)*, the list is endless. This is to show that the Igbo attitude to name is much more than influence on one’s destiny, though not devoid of it but it takes him far across his relationship with the “Other than man”. This fact must be considered before changing such names because those who know the essence may wish to drag it

to any lent, unless they are adequately consulted and convinced *ab initio*. Let us then give some attention the effect of name and name change controversy in Abia state.

5.5.1 The positive effect of name change crusade in Abia State

In most cases where names are changed the respite and momentary relief enjoyed by the recipients of the new name is the best thing that happened to them, thus: (i) Psychological relief: Samuel Onyekwere (Personal communication, 21st February, 2016) said that at least since that 1995 he changed from answering *Obiaozuo* he has enjoyed peace of the mind if nothing else.

Deborah Nwachineke (Personal communication, 9th March, 2016) said that there has not been much remarkable prosperity since the son in law brought the prayer theme from Owerri and changed their family name from Nwagwu to Nwachineke, but the joy of receiving a new name is fulfilling. She advocated for thorough investigation, proper enquiry and consultation before any people should venture into such exercise because she never knew that their former name *Nwagwu* was related to the god of medicine and healing in Igbo tradition.

(ii) Ancestral pride: Joshua Nwokeleme (Personal communication, 24th February, 2016) said that the pride of knowing ones ancestral root is priceless. All these comments show that the idea of making change of name a condition

for material prosperity as claimed in some religious quarters by some religious leaders and preachers using Jacobean story is not a holistic interpretation of Scripture.

5.5.2 The negative effect of name change crusade in Abia State

The sad effect of the unilateral and indiscriminate interpretation of Scriptural texts like Genesis 32 leaves more to be desired. The adverse effect of change of name from the area of study comes mostly when it is done for religious reasons. When the ministers did not take time to study the origin and real meaning of the original name; and through dialogue, due consultations and earnest prayers carry everybody along, it becomes counterproductive. The mere using of Jacobean story as a yardstick to impose a new name on a person or people for reasons of spiritual and material wellbeing amounts to something similar to superstition and gambling. The effect of such unguarded movement could be detrimental to human relationship. As Ugwueye & Umeanolue (2015) observed:

From time immemorial, the human person is being confronted with many evils ranging from social, religious, economic, and political to psychological problems. These problems are sources of worry to the human being and as such there is need to ask questions about the happenings in one's life. Therefore, human beings seek answers to these perplexities of existence. To get answers and solutions, religious people need Charismatic persons to interpret the divine mind. Hence,

contemporary Christians have made recourse to prophets in order to have their problems and needs solved and met respectively (p.67).

a) Socio-cultural segregation and communal disharmony

Socio-cultural activities with which the people are known for are jeopardized as there is division, lack of trust and agreement. Communal and family unity which is a core value of the Igbo people is badly affected hence division sets in among those who support, those who are not in support and those who are neutral. Exchange of greetings and visits, which is Igbo core value become segregative. Some festivals like *Iri Ji* (new yam festival) and *Igba Ekpe* (masquerade dancing) that use to bring people together die gradually. The abroad members of the village now dread home coming for fear of insecurity.

The administration of such a community is affected in the sense that there will be a parallel government by those in opposition depending on the opinion of the traditional ruler. Lucky Nwaononiwu (Personal communication, 20th February, 2016) said that the village got split into three parties of those who supported the change of name, those who opposed it and those who are neutral (where he belongs). People started avoiding one another he continued; and parallel leaderships were set up both at family, village and community levels.

In some cases, brothers living in the same compound whose opinions differ begin to taunt and avoid each other. For example, in *Umuopara* village at *Obingwa* area, Uzoma Okpo (Personal Communication, 26th March, 2016)

lamented that even his own brother who is also a minister hated and distanced him because he did not support the change of their original name to something else because he discovered that they ignorantly labelled it fetish, which is not true. There are developments that come with time but in the few places where there was an immediate progress after the change of name, it will be attributed to the change thereby making the enterprise attractive.

While this work agree that God can answer prayers and prosper people, we observe that there are good and bad coincidences. The African Igbo is incurably religious and superstitious; he believes that there is an intention and cause behind everything. The stress on the power behind a name and the influence of name on the bearer and the rate at which religious leaders promote it based on Biblical examples like Jacob has affected the mind-set of many in the Nigerian society. The researcher recalls here that in 2011 when former President of Nigeria Goodluck Jonathan won the election and released his profile of how he rose from grass to grace; many parents who had babies within Aba were naming their children after 'Goodluck'. No sooner than he conceded defeat in the April, 2015 polls than the trend stopped with some feelings as though they acted too fast. Onunwa recalled that if he had not resisted the change of their village name '*Ofe-Nkoro*' the speedy development they had in recent times would have been attributed to it. People who change names without going through the historical and anthropological interpretations of the native

name may not be the best after all. The Whiteman who brought the Gospel to us most times answer funny names and yet they did not change it because of the Gospel. They answer names like Green, White, Rice, Bush, Backhouse, Broom et cetera. These names are capable of negative influences if names actually do.

It is better therefore, to study the real intention of religious texts and or follow some more acceptable standards that bring out moral lessons which challenge believers to put in more efforts in their areas of endeavour, hoping that one day God will answer their prayers than just recommending a change of name and taking advantage of their plight. Ugwueye (2004) agrees with this as he commented that the use of speech in a manner contrary to that for which it was intended for is certainly intrinsically evil. For him a lie told in our ordinary life is usually capable of causing discomfort and catastrophe of different proportions. It is worse when God is said to be the one speaking, this has in the past caused the death of many people, and led communities and nations into war, made people to be fanatical and caused many to live in fools' paradise for years.

b) Religious rifts and economic setback in the community

When the host community of a church is in disharmony, it affects the church adversely. In the case of *Umuajameze-Umuoparain* Umuahia south LGA, Abia state, Lucky Nwaononiwu (Personal communication, 20th February,

2016) said that St. Paul's Anglican Church witnessed tremendous withdrawal of members who belonged to the party that accepted the change of name. Their reason for withdrawal from church membership was to disassociate themselves from those who refused the name changing, whom they label unbelievers of which they cannot partake of the Holy Communion with such people. The situation became a snare to subsequent ministers posted to such a place whose sermons are censored and weighed in the balance of the controversy.

Today many Christians seem confused as to the efficacy of the word of God under which disguise their former names were changed. Majority of those interviewed could not testify to the sudden breakthrough "the men of God" promised. A woman walked into my office one faithful afternoon asking me if God tells lies. I made her answer the question before she narrated her ordeal in the hands of the free interpreters and peddlers of the Gospel. According to her, after changing of the native name (perceived source of misfortune) as a condition for the release of the husband's ceased containers and business decline and after paying the prophet the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand naira as part payment, she went there the following week to discover that the containers were already auctioned. In her confusion and chagrin she ran to my office with her question, and in tears. I discovered that those independent prophets and freelance preachers make prey of the innocent, gullible, ignorant even overzealous members of the public who are frustrated. It was from that

point the interest for this work became a burden, and it serves as a little endeavour to save our society from the antics of fakes, and half-baked preachers.

Deborah Nwachineke (Personal communication, 9th, 2016) said, “People need to be enlightened on these things before it gets out of control, nobody told us the meaning of our original surname if not now, my in law brought those ministers and till now no much impact”. Any progress we have seen is the normal one that comes with time, otherwise struggle continues. In his own experience Ahamefula Ihesiaba (Personal communication, 29th March, 2016) said that it is just better every one decides to put effort in what he does and look up to God, no matter the name you answer you can still prosper. I was pressurised to change my name but it has not changed anything, but for the euphoria of changing my original name from Jacob based on Genesis 32 narrative to *Ahamefula*, no regrets though but things should be said the way they are. This is why Utely (2015) clearly warns that in narratives the truth is found in the whole literary unit and not the details, therefore an interpreter should beware of proof-texting or using Old Testament narratives as a precedent for one’s life.

Ahamefula is right, because some people in the bible had their prayers answered without changing their names, like Jabez (1Chron.4:9-10) though his name means ‘pain’ due to the mother bore him in pain. There were three

Disciples of Christ who answered 'James' which is Greek equivalent to Hebrew Jacob, yet they did not change their names. Mary means 'bitter' (ness), and Moses sister (Mirrian) and Jesus' mother answered such name to the end. God did not force them to change their names before granting them favour. In the modern times, we have seen people rise to the pick without changing their names, like the current President of South Africa whose name is Jacob, otherwise he would not have risen to that level at the first instance, it is only but a coincidence. The late Catholic Bishop of Aba Archdiocese '*Ezeonyia*', rose to that level and retained his name to the. The present Anglican Archbishop of Aba Province '*Ikechi Nwosu*', retains native names and is highly placed, including his Catholic counterpart Bishop *Ugorji*. There would have been endless religious riot had all these people started changing their names in order to prosper.

Igbo people are usually traders; every community has a market and market day which could attract outsiders for patronage. When the community is in disarray they lose the patronage because outsiders will be afraid of their security and the economy of that people will witness a setback. In the area of agriculture, there is usually a communal land which is apportioned to the male folks every farming season, including palm trees and oil mills; these economic areas will rot away for lack of attention amidst the crises. If the matter is taken to the court both parties will keep spending, like the case of *Umuajameze* that has lasted for

about twenty-four years now. As the annual festivals that attract those who live abroad are affected, and by extension the zeal for home-coming, the economic boost usually experienced in the village during such occasions are affected. At the end of the day common sense should be allowed to prevail by both parties because now the real interpretation is being realised. All the troubles would have been averted if the religious leaders and preachers took time to investigate the meaning of the name and perhaps followed due process of proper consultations and dialogue.

The trait of trying to help God is common within the Patriarchal narratives and should be avoided by learning the lessons they try to convey. Abraham told lies to help God protect him from the people of Gerar in Genesis 12:2, but at the end it was God who saved him from Abimelech. Sarah did the same by offering her maid Hagar (Gen.17:17-22) to her husband to help God raise an heir. Isaac also lied concerning Rebekah his wife the way and place as the father (Gen.20:2-3). In all the instances when man sets out to help God he gets it wrong with a sad results; all that God wants is simple trust in his faithfulness and obedience to his command. If Christians and of course all men do this today the world will be a better place for all. The major factor behind major terrorist attacks and series of insurgence and unrest in the world today and in Nigeria is as a result of men trying to help God.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary

The Old Testament is a classical literature. It is a library of many books that took about one thousand five hundred years to assemble. It contains the records of origin and developmental stages of traditions and religious ideologies of the Jews (The chosen people of God), as well as the Holy Writ for Christianity. The compilers and editors of the Bible made use of various forms of literature to pass their messages across. Such literary forms are poems, prose, psalms, proverbs, and narratives. Some forms of narratives they used are myths, legend, saga and aetiology. The narrator was at liberty to introduce some personal elements while considering popular or personal interest as well as the feeling of the audience. Therefore, the scripture needs some level of interpretation for understanding. Before now the interpretation of scripture enjoyed a standard. This is to avoid abuse of texts which could amount to deception, and consequently leading to social disorder.

Today, most religious preachers and teachers decide to pick scriptural texts and interpret them anyhow to suit their interest. This work is especially on change of name in Abia state-Nigeria from the backdrop of aetiological discourse in Genesis 32. The work tried to show that one of the scriptural texts

interpreted anyhow by most preachers of our time is the Jacobean stories as found in Genesis 25-35, especially chapter 32 where Jacob's name was changed to Israel. In considering this, various literatures and theories related to the Jacobean cycle were reviewed as part of the study approach. That is Gunkel's unity of character and basic formula, Blum's toledot and mythical aetiology theories. The theories among others were adopted, whereby the narrator of Jacobean story is seen as following a cycle and a regular pattern of presenting issues. For example, when a person or place name is given or changed the narrator carefully explains the circumstances surrounding the name, its meaning and place in history. This is the typical of aetiology, and a deliberate authorial intention to explain some monumental artefacts and traditions. Key terms and concepts contained in the topic are discussed. In so doing, the Old Testament was presented as the Scripture for Jewish religion being divided into the law, the prophets and the writings, which form the first part of the Christian Scripture with the New Testament as the second part.

The work looked at the aetiology of the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as a unit of the patriarchal cycle of events recorded in order to trace the origin of some socio-religious and cultural developmental practices Israel witnessed in their history at a time. The narrators made use of different literary forms like aetiology to convey their message. Aetiology is defined as the study of origination and causation. The study shows that if scriptural texts are interpreted

according to their genres, it will be safer for the entire human society. The work discussed some aetiological tools with which the Old Testament patriarchal and Jacobean narratives could be literarily, theologically and hermeneutically assessed. Such tools include Nomenclature, Supremacy of God, Formal Affirmation and All Inclusion Indices. The tools helped to appreciate the unity, diversity and cohesive appraisal of the entire patriarchal and Jacobean narrative as contained in the Pentateuch. This helped in arriving at the conclusion that the Jacobean narrative endeavour in Genesis 32 is all about aetiology and not a sample case for change of name as a condition for prosperity.

The word discourse is defined as the assessment or examination of phenomena using a particular yard stick; it is a unique process of deriving meaning from knowledge and social practices. The Jacobean narrative is however, the phenomena assessed using aetiological platform as a literary structure common with OT authors and editors. This helped to identify some editorial interests behind the narrative which is far from the advocacy of changing of name as a condition for prosperity as some self-styled present day preachers insinuate. The narrative is rather a deliberate literary design to assign historical and religious signature to the origins of the name 'Israel' and the Jewish dietary taboo on eating the sinew of the hip of an animal. It was a deliberate attempt to trace origins. It is seen as a cycle of events because most events follow the same pattern of presentation both within the Jacobean story as

well as the larger patriarchal narratives as contained in the Pentateuch. The work is given more authenticity by an exegetical analysis undertaken by the researcher. The research went further to investigate the dangers of interpreting scripture anyhow, using some Christians of Eastern Nigeria Igbo extraction in Abia State as cases at hand. At the end of this academic endeavour of assessing the Old Testament Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 by aetiology discourse the summary shows that:

- The Old Testament as a distinct and classical literature with various literary forms needs some level of training to be interpreted rightly.
- The Jacobean narratives in Genesis 32 are not a historical reference record for change of name but aetiological masterpiece.
- Changing a name may not be entirely wrong based on genuine reasons and following due process, but not a guarantee for spiritual and material prosperity as far as the Jacobean aetiological narratives in Genesis 32 are concerned.
- When a name is changed without due considerations and consultations, it could result to socio-religious and economic conflict and setback.
- If any name must be changed it has to undergo an etymological study for accurate interpretation, especially Igbo names which were corrupted by the white man and his influence on Igbo culture. Igbo names portray their

world views, religion, history and culture, and are still relevant today as it was in the ancient social cycle.

- Jacobean aetiological narratives were developed and documented specifically within the Jewish socio-religious and cultural milieu. Therefore, religious teachers, leaders and preachers in their interpretation and hermeneutics of such texts can undergo OT literary training to avoid creating social disharmony that could be inimical to socio-religious, economic and cultural developments both now and in the future. The arbitrary and unilateral interpretation of Biblical texts like Genesis 32 by preachers in Abia state and round the globe as a yardstick for change of name as a means of achieving material breakthrough is misleading. This study discovered that not all the people involved subscribe to the change and the result is conflicts of various degrees. The study discovered that the concept of aetiology in Genesis 32 at its best offers an interpretive platform upon which the passage presents its central message of progressive fulfilment of God's covenant promise and the origin of names like *Mahana'im*, *Penu'el* and mostly *Isra'el*, as well as the origin of the dietary law prohibiting a Jew from eating the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh of an animal.

6.2 Conclusion

Having examined the Jacobean aetiological narrative in Genesis 32, and having acknowledged the role of literary genres like aetiology in the OT; and having appreciated the significance of name among the Jewish and Igbo people: we hereby conclude that change of name is not an automatic ticket to prosperity, since the same result is not achieved in all cases. We have realised that certain situations in life are just the way they are, and that somebody's status may change for better without necessarily changing one's name. The Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 is therefore aetiology; this must be established before further interpretations. It is however, dangerous to pick up a Bible text and assign meanings anyhow.

As far as human life, development and relationship are concerned, religion is of great and vital importance, and when religious texts are not handled properly the aim of religion is seriously altered. We also discovered that when parents show favouritism over their children, it could result to an unending enmity in the lineage as with Esau (Edom) and Jacob (Israel). Otherwise, the society will keep witnessing endless antagonism. For example, in Christianity Ishmael is illegitimate and in Islam Isaac is illegitimate; in Jacobean narratives, the editor tries to aetiologically explain why Israel deserves Isaac's blessing and birth right as Jacob the younger brother outwits Esau and made him to appear stupid thereby justifying the dominance of Israel over Edom. Therefore

religious preachers and teachers who tend to interpret Biblical texts would need to consider the outcome on human relationship and the society at large before assigning meanings that could result to social disorder. The larger society will be the victim of such errors at the long run.

There is no doubt however, that our individual and or collective value system, sacramental theology, philosophy, religious inclinations, socio-economic interests and historical backgrounds, and a host of other accidentals of life will definitely influence greatly our mode of interpretation of scriptural texts. This the major finding of this study, therefore the next segment form the recommendations.

6.3 Recommendations

Having undertaken the study on change of name in Abia state form the backdrop of aetiological discourse in Genesis 32, we hereby recommend that:

- There should be more effort by teachers of future religious leaders and

- Preachers in teaching them the proper way of interpreting and handling

- Literary genres like aetiology in the OT narratives.

- The present day preachers need to be encouraged to attend renowned higher institutions for deeper study of the Old Testament Bible.

-Secondary schools curriculum in Nigeria should include elementary Hebrew and Greek languages just like English, French and German languages.

-Media and publishing houses are to be held responsible for promoting religious messages and teachings that are deceptive, anti-social and inimical to social peace and harmony, especially when such messages are based on Scriptural texts.

-Modern day parents should hold all their children with equal love to avoid domestic crisis that could escalate into social conflict as it lingers to successive generations. This recommendation is vital because aetiological narratives like Genesis 32 are based on single family related matters which later affected the entire nation of Israel.

-Religious adherents should avoid such religious teachers who present money before attending to their spiritual needs; they most often interpret the scripture anyhow to suit their selfish economic interests. This is important because many victims wonder how to identify wrong preachers.

-Any religious teaching that discourages hard work needs a second thought, because the society will suffer it at the long run when the victims will likely join secret cults, terrorist groups, kidnappers, drug addicts or become hoodlums as a result of frustration. Frustration could set in when

somebody is made to believe firmly that changing his name will attract good fortune and it didn't happen after a long time.

-There should be proper consultations, sincere dialogue and reconciliation machinery set up to trace the root cause of the problem. Reconciliation will however, usher in the growth of evangelism, morality, spirituality, with socio-economic and political developments.

-Community and clan leaders should take the documentation of their ancestral history very seriously which should include the meaning and reasons behind the name they bear to avoid confusion in the future.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

In the course of carrying out this research many issues of urgent concern came up which could not be covered in greater details due to scope and space.

Such areas are hereby suggested for further research as follows:

i. Sound theological education and training is a prerequisite for proper understanding and interpretation of Scriptural texts. It takes proper educational information to read and understand documents like the aetiological narrative in Genesis 32, which was written in far distant time and location, in a complete different context from the twenty-first century Nigeria. This issue needs more attention.

ii. The inclusion of Biblical languages in both primary and post-primary schools in Nigeria will serve as a measure for in-depth knowledge of Scripture. When the study of religious books like the Bible and Quran are given the same level of attention as other subject areas in the lower levels of education, the magnitude of religious deceptions will be reduced. The fact remains that the African mind is incurably religious, and if he is not set on the religious right tracts early enough in life, he may fall victim to wrong notions which will definitely affect the larger society. This area also needs urgent attention, especially in this era of insurgency and terrorism.

iii. Pre-media scrutiny is a process for regulating the activities of religious ideologies meant for public consumption. In the recent past media houses used to be very careful and conscious of any information they pass to the public, be it political or religious, due to the danger posed by wrong information to the entire society. Presently, the contrary is the case; radio stations and television channels now promote paid religious programmes without properly vetting the type of message passed to the public. This work recommends that this attitude should be put on check for the safety of the society, since it is obvious that religious ideas guide human actions. There is need to carry out a detailed research work on this area of concern,

iv. The role of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) in protecting the faith of average religious adherents and projecting the content of religious tenets should

be revived. Religious bodies like CAN should device a means of monitoring and placing sanctions on preachers who meddle with the Bible. Such religious bodies were established as custodians of the truth. There should be a standard of operation and stand on religious issues whether contemporary or Scriptural. It is therefore, the primary duty of such organized religious bodies to ensure and enforce compliance to the standards without any dint of compromise, because it could endanger the integrity of the faith when an average adherent operates on wrong religious notions. This area also needs more detailed research.

v. Equal love by parents over their children is a panacea to generational domestic violence. When parents, for whatever reason show more interest on any of their children to the notice of others, they sow the seed of discord that could germinate into endless conflicts. For example, the life of innocent Joseph in the Bible was endangered because his father Jacob loved him more than the rest. In the case of Jacob, the family was divided into two, with the father Isaac loving Esau, and Rebecca loving Jacob. It is this domestic anomaly that incubated the crisis and conflict that was to devastate Israel and Edom through many future generations. The aetiological narrative in Genesis 32 is an evidence of a prolonged rivalry with Israel claiming superiority over her kinsman Edom.

vi. Due process, dialogue and proper consultations are the power behind a successful social change. This work is not by any means opposed to change of name by an individual or a community, it rather recommends that if a peoples'

name must be changed, it must be with the consent of all the stakeholders to avoid conflicts and social disorder. The exercise will yield a better result than just using the Jacobean narrative in Genesis 32 as a yardstick because it is an aetiological masterpiece. A more comprehensive work needs also be done on this area.

vii. Formal documentation of communal history serves as a preventive measure against generational confusion and conflict. If the present day leaders of communities take seriously, the documentation of the history of traditions, cultures and customs of their people, including the history behind the name they bear like Jewish editors, the mistakes of the past will not repeat itself. It is clear that the editors solved this kind of problem in Israel using the aetiology in Jacobean narrative of Genesis 32. There is therefore, an urgent need to carry out a research in this area of need.

viii. The Socio-cultural, moral and economic values residual in Igbo names are unquantifiable and therefore, more research endeavours should be channelled towards this fast eroding divine endowment, otherwise generations unborn will suffer for it and will not forgive us both in Abia state and beyond.

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APPENDIX
PRIMARY SOURCES

NAME	STATUS	DATE OF INTERVIEW	PLACE OF INTERVIEW
Pst. El-Praise Odwyer	Pastor	4 th November, 2015	No 1 Chief Onyema Rd. Off Umuchichi Rd. Osisioma Ngwa LGA.
Pst. C. C. Okeke	Pastor	4 th November, 2015	Ukaegbu Rd. Obingwa LGA.
Pst. O. C. Emmanuel (Engr.)	The G.O. of Dominion (Assembly Ministry)	5 th November, 2015	Ala-ojii, Ugwunagbo LGA.
Bro. Chikezie Abangwu	Sabbath Scholl Teacher	5 th November, 2015	SDA-Ogborhill, Obingwa LGA.

Mr. E. C Adiele	Civil servant (Rtd)	3 rd December, 2015	Umuako-Nsirimo, Umuahia South LGA.
Barr. O. Nwagwu	Lawyer	31 st January, 2016	13 Nwaguru Street
Sam Onyekwere	Musician	2 nd February, 2016	St. Luke's Ogor Hill
Sir L. Nwononiwu	Knight	20 th February, 2016	Ekenna Avenue, Aba South LGA.
Rev. J. Nwokeleme	Priest	24 th February, 2016	St. John's Osusu, Aba South LGA.
Uchegbu Nwogwugwu (83yrs)	Village Elder	24 th February, 2016	Umuwoma Urrata, Isiala-Ngwa North LGA.
Lady Deborah Nwachineke	School Proprietor	9 th March, 2016	Akalnna Rd. Aba South LGA

Ven. Uzoma Okpo	Priest	26 th March, 2016	Lagos Street, Aba North LGA.
Prof. Udobata Onunwa	Lecturer	29 th March, 2016	Trinity College, Umuahia South LGA.
Ahamefula Ihesiaba	Farmer	29 th March, 2016	Umuako-Nsirimo,
Pst. Paul Ugorji	Reverend	10 th October, 2016	Umuahia South LGA Christ Methodist church 21/25 Market Rd. Aba South LGA.
Pst. Okorie Ndubuisi	Pastor	10 th October, 2016	Christ the Ark of Salvation, 75 Akalanna Rd. Aba South LGA.

Pst. Eugene Uwalaka	Pastor	19 th October, 2019	The Power Soul Saving Church, 70c Okigwe Rd. Aba South LGA.
Pst. John Eze	Pastor	19 th October, 2019	Apostolic Christian Church, 34 Omuma Rd. Aba North LGA.

NB. It is ideal to note that some people interviewed represented the views not only of where they reside but the part of Igboland they come from. For example, Sir Lucky Nwaononiwu is from Umuajameze in Umuahia South and resides in Aba; Prof. Udobata Onunwa and Lady Deborah Nwachineke hail from Mbaise in Imo state but reside in Umuahia and Aba respectively; and Pastor El-Praise Odwyer is from Odukpani in Cross River state. This helped us gather various and varying opinions on change of names within Igboland, among various church denominations in Nigeria and particular in Abia state and her neighbour.

The findings helped to authenticate our conclusions and enhanced the recommendations raised in this work.