

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Poverty with its concomitant effects of alienation, marginalization and dependency poses serious challenge to Nigerian society. The increasing incidence of poverty in Nigeria in spite of various efforts used by a range of poverty-related programmes and schemes in the country is really an irony. It is a paradox in the sense that Nigeria is endowed with great potentials that is capable of making it a poverty free nation yet a huge number of Nigerians live below poverty line. Certainly, poverty has become a breeding forum for all kinds of social ills such as kidnapping, armed-robbery, ritual killing, pipeline vandalization, all kinds of criminal acts and all manner of immorality and so on.

The problem is not that one is rich and the other poor, the problem is the kind of social structure and social interaction in which the rich and the poor operate. The wealth of the rich gives them power over the poor. That is to say that the dehumanization of the poor in the Nigerian society by the rich folks is not a strange story. The poor in society suffer several degrees of humiliation in the hands of some of the rich in society. Unfortunately, the Nigerian society has not been able to provide the needed support to some vulnerable citizens. There is much concentration on the wealthy class rather than on the poor members of the society.

The socio-economic system in Nigeria is a *replica* of the social framework of Luke's Gospel: a nation with a widening gulf between very few wealthy and numerous citizens living far below poverty level. Their wealth if equitably distributed would instantly render Nigeria a poverty-free nation. But unfortunately the majority of Nigerian families fall within the

poverty line, while a very tiny percentage is starkly rich. For example, the northern states of Nigeria are known for their rich agricultural produce and the food basket of the nation and yet they are relatively poor. This is occasioned by a number of reasons; one of which is lack of mechanised agro processing machines. Most of the crops produced there in the north are perishable of which if they are not properly processed for storage would spoil thereby leaving the people poorer than ever. Again the quest for foreign made or imported goods is another greater reason for extreme poverty in Nigeria. When the people cannot rely on their locally made goods, it affects their economy adversely.

The quest for white collar jobs or government work again poses its own challenge to Nigerian economy. Most Nigerian youths depend on the government for opportunities to make a living; while government on their part cannot employ over five thousand graduates that pass out of Nigeria universities yearly. Nwankwo (2015) laments that, “the government of Nigeria and all its sectors cannot make available employment opportunities that can engage its teeming population” (p.35). This however, no doubt results in frustrations that can lead to armed robbery, kidnapping, prostitution and other social vices in a bid to survive.

The challenges of poverty in contemporary Nigerian society can as well be compared to the problem of Lucan world. Consequently, Luke’s concern for social and economic revolution and reformation is found in his expression and analogy using the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). The interest of Luke in the parable could be to champion the course of the poor, marginalized, social outcasts and against some social practices meted against them.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) is a story of the fate of two men, the rich man and Lazarus. The story being tableaux of a rich man splendidly clothed in a purple garment and fine linen; and feasted sumptuously every day. And in contrast, a poor man named Lazarus was poor and was dumped at the rich man's gate begging. Lazarus was too hungry that to request for the crumbs from rich man's table and too weak to drive off the dogs that licks his sores.

The rich man died and was buried while at death, Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom by the Angels. In the next world, the parts played by the two men are reversed. The rich man's earthly enjoyment and good fortune turns into torment and thirst while Lazarus is found in an eschatological merriment. The rich man from his place of torment begs for a drop of water as Lazarus begged for crumbs under the rich man's table. The rich man begged Abraham to send Lazarus to his five brothers who are still alive on earth to warn them. Abraham replied that a visitor from hell would not change their selfish will. That his brothers already knew the way of life or could have known it, for Moses and the Prophets made it clear, but the brothers had not heeded, and no miracle could change them.

This work however is an exegetical study of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31), to portray the plight of the poor in contemporary Nigerian society. It is ironical that the poor suffer untold hardships in a society that has abundant natural resources. Sometimes, it is erroneously assumed that the poor in Nigeria are lazy people when they toil day and night with little or no support from the government. Most Nigerian roads are bad; there is no good power supply, devalued currency, poor health facilities, promise and fail syndrome from some Nigerian politicians and other unfavourable conditions that challenge human existence in Nigeria. The rich are not the most hardworking people in Nigeria only

that they are privileged to have been given the needed economic empowerment or may be through financial connections.

The propelling factor for the choice of this research topic is based on the unfavourable conditions that the poor have to go through in order to survive in Nigeria. Most Nigerians have the potentials and skills to be self-employed and as well employ others but the economic conditions in the country, inability to provide a favourable condition for funds to aid small scale businesses or farmers; good road networks, power supply, creation of employment opportunities to enable an ordinary man to survive are scarcely available. The research focuses on how the suffering of the poor in Nigeria can be ameliorated.

Throughout the history of the church, most Christians ancient and modern find the gospels of spiritual salvation alone far more comfortable, so that their lifestyles and finances are scarcely affected. The consequence of the above is untold socio-economic pressure. It is obvious that the gap between the rich and poor is widening every day in contemporary Nigerian society. On the side of the rich, it is all about neglect and exploitation, and the poor on the other hand are in sorry situation. The Government overlooks the plight of the poor, thereby making their lives miserable. For example, Oliomogbe (2015), reports that over five hundred (500) inmates of the Leprosy Rehabilitation Camp in Eku, Ethiope East Local Council of Delta State have stormed Asaba, the state capital to protest against 'neglect.' The angry protesters, the annoyed lepers, accused the State Government of cutting their monthly stipends from N8, 000 to N2, 500. Ahon (2017) reports another protest by the Lepers demanding increase in their monthly stipends, feeding and payment of arrears. Some of the placards carried by the protesters read: "We are dying of hunger, our children are starving... pay us N15, 000 or we return to the road" (p.9), others read thus, "Is there any market for the

poor?” (p.9). These are the instances of neglect on plight of the poor in the society.

The story of the pensioners and those who managed their fund is another big deal. Against this backdrop, there is real need to critically re-x-ray the socio-economic situation in Nigeria. This forms the researcher’s interest on Luke’s solidarity to the poor and his concern for social justice. A thorough exegesis of this text helps the researcher to understand the teaching of the text which favours the right attitudes and actions concerning wealth and poverty and its application to Nigerian context. The parable will sound as a warning to the rich about the peril of neglecting the needs of the poor. It also offers encouragement, hope and assurance of the transforming love of God to the poor and those who suffer from social injustice. It will seek to offer spiritual and moral solutions to the problems of social injustice, social strata and poverty.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

One of the major issues in Luke’s gospel and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in particular is the issue of possession. Poverty and wealth form the major challenges of the Lucan world and Nigeria. The increasing incidence of poverty in Nigeria in spite of several efforts used by a range of poverty-related programmes and schemes in the country is really an irony. It is paradox in the sense that Nigeria is endowed with great potentials (human and materials) that is capable of making it a poverty free nation yet a huge number of Nigerians live in poverty level while very few are flamboyantly rich. This is a problem that needs to be addressed. Poverty is never idealized. It should be alleviated because marginalization and oppression can turn people away from the Lord, but wealth tends to do even more as people think they can independently supply all their own needs thereby act in such a manner that can bring about dehumanization, injustice and oppression.

The facts therefore remain that:

1. Poverty is on the increase and most Nigerians are under the dominion of the poverty in a society that preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ.
2. The rich seem to be doing nothing in caring for the poor; instead they create more stress to the poor around.
3. Poverty breeds a lot of social ills: ill health, hunger, lack of access to education, malnutrition, death and a whole lot of social ills - crime, prostitution, militancy, and all kinds of social vices.
4. The Government and the Church who ought to be the mouth piece of the poor or ought to champion the crusade of poverty alleviation seem to be supporting the trends and even creating new ones.
5. The poor suffer all kinds of dehumanization, marginalization and oppression from the hands of the rich.
6. The level of poverty increases in geometrical progression and comes in so many forms: economic meltdown, economic downturn, and economic recess.

Then the big questions remain:

1. How can the study best interpret exegetically the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.16-31) in the Nigerian context?
2. How can the research relate the socio-economic background of the parable to Nigerian context?
3. How can the message of the parable be applied to address the issue of poverty in Nigeria?
4. How can the parable's message be incarnated in the heart of the rich and elites that they should not be arrogant with their wealth?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to address the aforementioned questions using the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) as a paradigm. Most particularly the study aims:

1. To interrogate the differences that exist between the poor and the rich in Nigeria.
2. To investigate the neglect and exploitation that is meted on the poor and vulnerable citizens of Nigeria.
3. To encourage the government not to overlook the plight of the poor in Nigeria.
4. To seek for spiritual, financial and moral solutions to the problems of social injustice and poverty in Nigeria.

With the aforementioned purposes, the social relationship between the rich and poor would be analysed using the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as contained in Luke 16.19-31 as a paradigm.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The exegetical scope of this work is limited to the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16. 19-31). The work limits its purviews to the right use of possessions. The study is expected to carry out a thorough exegetical study of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). The study shall apply it to exploring the solution (spiritual, financial and moral solutions) to Nigeria socio-economic and socio-political challenges as represented in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Hermeneutically, the scope of this work is limited to socio-economic situation in Nigeria with particular emphasis to the Eastern Geo-political area of Nigeria normally known as Igboland. This however creates an opportunity for other researchers who may wish to investigate into the same parable to apply it to other geo-

political zones. Nevertheless, the study will be used to address the problem of rich-poor relationship in Nigeria generally.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will be of immense significance to the rich, poor, government, non-governmental organizations and church. In more specific terms, the rich would understand that they should share their resources with the poor. By that the rich who live in affluence should accept to develop a simple life style in order to contribute more generously to alleviation of poverty and social injustice associated with it. The government would be encouraged to make conscious use or/and implementation of poverty alleviation programmes already introduced to reduce the hardship of the poor masses and this will bring a better social interaction of all the citizens irrespective of the class. The Church, especially Anglican and Roman Catholic, would be spurred to intensify their teachings on love and care so as to better the lives of the less privileged ones. Most especially, the general public would be encouraged to be self-reliant so as to reduce their dependence on the government.

1.6 Methodology

Based on the fact that this work is purely an exegetical analysis of a biblical text and in order to arrive at a valid and reliable result, the study adopted the synchronic analytical method which involves semantic, grammatical and syntactical investigation of parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). It also adopted hermeneutical and theological methods of applying the message of the parable to contemporary society. The work also made use of the secondary sources data collection which includes documentary analysis of both published and unpublished texts and discussions to review works already done on the subject matter. The approach used is exegetical and evaluative. Karl Max's theory of social class and theories of

poverty were used to analyse the findings of the research so as to produce a workable template for ameliorating the plights of the poor in the country.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The study will proffer definitions of the working terms. The terms to be defined are: Exegesis, Analysis, Rich, Poor, and Parable.

1.7.1 Exegesis

Exegesis is the process of interpreting the meaning of a text and this involves critical examination of the author, the audience; cultural and historical environment setting of a text in order to give interpretation of the text (Palmer, 2014). In this context, exegesis can be defined as a critical analysis of a biblical text, seeking to discover its meaning, historicity and its relevance in application within human society. Richardson and Bowden (1983) define it as “The process of bringing out, to direct, to expound, and to interpret. It is a process of bringing out the meaning of a text; the work of textual interpretation” (p.5).

The term Exegesis is a transliteration of a Greek noun, *exêgêsis*, namely the process of bringing out. The Greek verb that dominates the word-constellation to which exegesis belongs means to direct, to expound, and to interpret, a critical interpretation or explication, especially of biblical and other religious texts. Hence exegesis is the process of bringing out the meaning of a text; the work of textual interpretation. It is a careful, systematic and critical study of the scripture to unravel the original and intended meaning of a Bible passage. Exegesis is generally understood to designate the praxis of the interpretation of texts. Exegesis is distinguished from *εισεγγελσις*, the process of bringing in, commonly employed to

designate the tendency to read meaning into a text rather than deriving meaning from a text itself.

1.7.2 Analysis

Analysis is an act or process of studying or examining something in details in order to discover more about it. Hornby (2008) defines it as gaining a detailed study or explanation of something. Stall (2010) defines it as a careful examination of a substance in order to find out what it consists of. Clarke (2007) also defines it as examining facts in order to give opinion on them. Analysis therefore involves critical examination or study of facts or something.

1.7.3 Rich

People define rich in many ways. Being rich means having goods, property, and money in abundance, which implies having more than enough to gratify normal needs or desires. The rich man is described in the parable as a man who had house, money, food, health, and in all probability, even clothes. Mbonu (2010) defines the term as a state of being wealthy. Stall (2010) on his part defines the term as one who lives in affluence, plenty and ostentatious. Clarke (2007) sees the term “rich” as not necessarily buoyant but the availability of the basic necessities of life. To be rich therefore is to have an abundance of material possessions, enjoying a large of property, well supplied with land, goods or money; wealthy, opulent, affluent and in general, a well-supplied, copious, bountiful, a rich treasury and a quality or state of being wealthy. This definition would be however be adopted in this study as a working definition.

1.7.4 Poor

The poor are those who lack sufficient money to live at considered comfortable or normal in a society. Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. However, poverty is more, much more than just not having enough money. Poor and poverty are always defined with the concept of economic marginality, persons who lack the essential means of livelihood. However, Okonkwo (2015) defines the term “poor” as being in lack or insufficiency of either social, spiritual or material resources. Hornby (2008) defines it as not having enough money for basic needs. Harris (2014) defines it as one who deserves pity and sympathy. Clarke (2007) defines it as a quality that is low or lower than expected. This study adopts Okonkwo’s definition of poverty as a working definition in that it encompasses both the social, spiritual, and material insufficiency which this study addresses.

According to Jensen (2001) there are six main types of poverty which include: situational, generational, absolute, relative, urban and rural. These categories of poverty show that a state of being poor is occasioned by a number of factors. It can hit anyone at any time. While some instances of poverty are created by situations, others are trapped in poverty because of the generation before. Poverty of this nature can be just continue the vicious cycle and bring the entire family down into a deep hole. It is based on this fact that this study advocates that the poor should be helped to survive instead of being oppressed.

1.7.5 Parable

There is no possible definition of parables because of its broad nature. Any definition that is broad enough to cover all the forms is so precise that it is almost useless. Etymologically, the word parable is a combination of Greek two words: *παρα* meaning alongside and *βάλλω*

meaning to throw. With the above in mind, the word parable (*παραβολη*) literally means throwing beside. It is a rhetorical figure of speech, setting one thing beside another to form a comparison or illustration.

Hornby (2008) defines the term parable as a short story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson especially one of those told by Jesus as recorded in the bible. According to Manson (1939), “parable is a literary creation in narrative form designed either to portray a type of character for warning or example or to embody a principle of God’s governance of the world and man” (p.65). While Dodd (1936) says that parable is metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, arresting the hearer by its vividness or sharpness, and leaving the mind sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into native thought. Parable as used in the research is an expanded analogy used to convince or persuade hearers to internalize any biblical thought. Hornby’s definition of the term would be accepted as a working definition because the idea of “parable” in this study serves as a moral lesson to correct what is considered as a problem in Nigeria society.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars have already done much work on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). The purpose of this chapter therefore is to explore the many scholarly works already done on the parable. The essence is to expose the various positions taken by scholars who attempted the exegetical interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Their divergent and convergent viewpoints should be brought into light. This review will also show that though much work have been done on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus there are still many areas yet to be touched. Consequently, the review hopefully will prove that much has not been said or written on the interpretation and understanding of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The wealth of the study gathered will enable the researcher build a concrete framework that will help the work to have a good exegetical and hermeneutical application of the parable. These have been grouped into the following sub headings:

- A. Conceptual Framework
- B. Theoretical Framework
- C. Empirical Studies

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus is told on the context of a man living an ostentatious life, otherwise the rich man; and Lazarus whose life was in a sorry and pitiable situation. That is to say that the rich man represents the wealthy on the one hand and Lazarus on the other hand stands for the poor. Consequently, the researcher will begin by looking into the concept of the word poor or poverty and the rich or wealthy and their consequential relationship from the scholars' arguments.

a. Poverty

There is no standard definition of the word poverty because of its multi-dimensional nature. However, poverty can be defined as a situation of low income or low consumption. It can also be viewed as a situation in which individuals are unable to meet the basic necessities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, education, security and health, (Stott, 1984). In a nut shell, poverty can be seen as a situation in which an individual is unable, because of economic, social, political and psychological incapacitation, to provide himself and his family the barest necessities of life. Still on the above, Aku, Ibrahim and Bulus (1997) analyses poverty from five dimensions of deprivation:

- (i) Personal and physical deprivation experienced as a result of health, nutritional, literacy and educational disability and lack of self-confidence.
- (ii) Economic deprivation drawn from the lack of access to property, income, assets, factors of production and finance.
- (iii) Social deprivation as a result of denial from full participation in social, political and economic activities
- (iv) Cultural deprivation in terms of lack of access to values, beliefs, knowledge, information and attitudes which deprive the people of control of their own destinies and;
- (v) Political deprivation in terms of lack of political voice to participate in decision making that affects their lives.

Stott (1984) traced the root of poverty to Old Testament and classified the words for poverty into threefold:

- i. First, and economically speaking, there are the indigent poor, who are deprived of basic necessities of life.

ii. Second, and sociologically speaking, there are the oppressed poor, who are powerless victims of human injustice.

iii. Thirdly, and spiritually speaking, there are humble poor, who acknowledge their helplessness and look to God alone for salvation.

Conversely, poverty is consequent of only economic deprivation, social, political, and spiritual. One may be rich materially, but if he has no voice socially and politically, he is poor. The poor are those who lack sufficient money or resources to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal life in a society. Poverty is about not having enough money to meet basic needs including food, clothing and shelter. Poverty is more, much more than just not having enough money. Poor and poverty are always defined with the concept of economic marginality, persons who lack the essential means of livelihood. Okonkwo (2015) defines the term “poor” as being in lack or insufficiency of either spiritual or material resources. Hornby (2008) defines it as not having enough money for basic needs. Harris (2014) defines it as one who deserves pity and sympathy. Clarke (2007) defines it as a quality that is low or lower than expected.

This is to say that the word, poverty is a term that concentrates on those who have the least money or other resources or, as Ridge and Wright (2008) argue it as a situation of extreme disadvantage experienced at the bottom of the social and economic scale. Yet poverty is more than being at the bottom of the income scale; it describes individuals and families who have inadequate resources to secure what is deemed a reasonable or expected standard of living within a given country.

According to Kreitzer (1992), “the poor man (πτωχός.) stands as a symbol of someone who is so rejected and despised by his fellow human beings that he has to rely solely upon God for his help” (p.139). Lazarus as his name implies is such.

Okonkwo (2015) describes poverty in this way:

Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty has many faces, changing from place to place and across time, and has been described in many ways. Most often, poverty is a situation people want to escape. So poverty is a call to action - for the poor and the wealthy alike - a call to change the world so that many more may have enough to eat, adequate shelter, access to education and health, protection from violence, and a voice in what happens in their communities (p.67).

Poverty as Okonkwo reports is all encompassing. It is economical, philosophical and social. Man who is hungry and has no voice in the society is a poor man. Others who see poverty in its multiple dimensions are Wolff, Lamb and Zur-Szpiro (2015) who see poverty thus:

Poverty is generally defined in terms of not having sufficient resources to meet a particular set of basic needs. The interest in resources, in terms of income and wealth is, therefore, instrumental: what matters is meeting needs, or avoiding deprivation. Yet there are various ways in which individuals can suffer from deprivation, such as through disability or discrimination, even if you have access to a reasonable level of resources. Hence philosophers argue that poverty needs to be redefined as ‘capability deprivation’, however it comes about, rather than low income (p.3).

This concept focuses on ‘capability approach’ in assessing lives. Poverty and wealth can be viewed from the point of what people can do and be. They believe that many variables influence individual capability. These variables include personal resources such as talents and skills and external resources including income and wealth and social and material structures like legal, cultural, and environmental factors. Therefore traditional definitions of poverty in terms of income and wealth isolate just one of the many factors that determine individual capability and well-being. Poverty should be re-understood in terms of capability deprivation. However, in the world as it is, individual or family lack of resources is an extremely significant reason for capability deprivation. Wolff, Lamb and Zur-Szpiro (2015) maintain that the traditional definition of poverty is in terms of an individual or family lacking the resources to meet a defined set of needs.

Despite the many definitions, one thing is certain; poverty is a complex societal issue. No matter how poverty is defined, it can be agreed that it is an issue that requires everyone’s attention.

The Greek word used as poor in New Testament Greek Varies: *πτωχός*. *πτωχός* means poor or destitute and as it implies a continuous state of inadequate or insufficient value. It also implies beggars who have lost their properties and wonder about in great unhappiness (Ukpong, 1995). Bammel (1968) opines that the *LXX* (Septuagint) use of the term *πτωχός* (poor) is translation of Hebrew words in the Old Testament as seen in *Ps.14:6* and *Ps.12* which means afflicted, oppressed, poor, and humble; primarily a person suffering from some kind of disability or distress. Merklein (1991) puts it thus “The word (*πτωχός*, poor) also has the religious sense of “pious”, “humble” as in *Ps. 18:22* and it is this religious component that dominates the concept of poor ‘the humble pious ones’ in the Old Testament.” (p.268). The main concern as regards

the poor in Old Testament is to care for them and not to discriminate. Strong (2001) has this to add to that effect:

In Israel at that time, poor people were not to be discriminated against; rather the community was to deal justly with them and the king had a special charge to protect their rights. The next word that the *LXX* translated for *πτωχός* is in 1Samuel 2:8 which means weak, lowly, poor, needy, haggard and scrawny. It refers to physical weakness whereby a person cannot challenge his opponents. It refers also to those in a socially weak position who do not have the power or authority to defend themselves when attacked. Such people are poor in that they have no strength and nobody. The third Hebrew word translated with *πτωχός* in the *LXX* is *ebiyon* which means one who seeks alms, a beggar; in a general sense, a poor person (p.5347).

Stott (1984) states that the study of whom the poor is by the biblical scholars “focus on the Old Testament in which a cluster of words for poverty, deriving from six main Hebrew roots occur more than 200 times. These may be classified in a variety of ways, economically, the indigent poor; sociologically, the oppressed poor who are powerless of human injustice; and spiritually, the humble poor who acknowledge their helplessness and look to God alone” (p.216). It is therefore important to note that to be poor is not only those who are economically deprived. It cuts across socio-economic, socio-religious and socio-political depressed. In likely manner, the poor can be translated in Igbo language as *ogbenye*.

Poverty can be classified, based on different criteria, as absolute poverty, relative poverty, rural poverty and urban poverty. Absolute poverty refers to lack of minimum physical requirements for existence; Absolute poverty is living at such a low level of income and wealth that one’s health, or even survival, is threatened. Stott quoting World Bank Report (1978) says: “Absolute poverty is condition of life so characterized by malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, squalid surroundings, high

infant mortality, and low life expectancy” (p.213). Relative poverty on the other hand refers to a situation in which a person’s or household’s provision of goods is lower than that of others. Relative poverty is living at a level of income that does not allow one to take part in the normal or encouraged activities for one’s society. Rural poverty is characterized by poor material condition, low level of education, lack of infrastructures, poor health condition, underemployment, low investment and high out- migration. Urban poverty on the other hand is characterized by environmental degradation, overcrowded accommodation, low per capita income, and other problems associated with urban areas such as slums, ghettos and shanties (Galbraith, 1969 and Rogers, 1988).

Luke uses diverse words to express the concept of the poor. These words are grouped into economic, social and religious. Roth (1997) said that “while Luke’s gospel may be a gospel of the poor, serious disagreement exists among scholars over who the poor are, for whom Luke advocates” (p.19). However of all the words used, as affirms by Shoemaker (2007), the predominant words for the poor favour the economic deprivation. Secombe (1983) added that “by the time of Jesus, ‘poor’ had become a religious self-description for certain groups of messianic pietists” (p.24). That is to say that there had been those who were voluntarily poor in a religious sense of it. Schottroff and Stegemann (1986) affirm that the diverse proposals of the meaning of “poor” in Luke include:

The poor as the “pious”; the poor are a “particular group” the poor as those who have “voluntarily abandoned their possessions”; the poor as the “poor disciples” who abandoned everything and followed Jesus; the poor as those afflicted with literal economic poverty, the poor in the light of the Old Testament, as designated heirs of salvation; the poor as “metaphor as a characterization of the nation of Israel.” Nevertheless, the “poor” to

Luke are more than a particular group mentioned above, rather it embraces all: economic, social, religious and political (p.91).

In most cases, most New Testament scholars arrive at linking the words poor and poverty with the concept of economic marginality, persons who lack the essential means of livelihood. Though there are very few who refer to poor metaphorically, like Secombe (1983), who are emphatic that poor is the deprived nation of Israel in need of God's salvation. He defines the poor as religious, social and economic deprivation and further asserts that "material deprivation is proto-typical or paradigmatic for all kinds of deprivation, helpless, oppression and suffering" (p.24).

Green (1995) rejects the tendency of defining Lucan poor "economically, on a scale of annual household income or with reference to an established, national or international poverty line" (p.80). To Green (1995), poor or rich are not simply economic terms, but relate to social status and social position, the outsiders or the insiders. He further argues that:

In fact, seven out of the ten occurrences of the word poor *πτωχος* in Luke appears in lists of this nature: poor, captive, blind, oppressed (4:18); poor, hungry, mournful, persecuted – (6:20); blind, lame, leper, deaf, dead, poor (7:22); poor, maimed, lame, blind (14:13); poor, maimed, blind and lame (14:21); poor, ulcerated, hungry (16:20,22) These represent poor in a wider sense, rather than narrowly economical (p.81).

However, Luke's choices of words for the poor are: *ἐνδεής* - needy, *πενιχρός* - the poor as a poor widow in the temple treasury, and *πτωχος* - the complete destitution which forces the poor to seek the help from others by begging. The material economic connotations of these terms are clear in the contexts they were used. On the other hand, the mention of three major public arenas: "the market place", the "synagogue", and "the banquet room", depict that the term poor "is not simply a term economically defined, it is related to issues of power and privilege, and social location as insider. Phoebe (1987), like Green, puts it this way, "the material poor, while paradigmatic of all kinds of

deprivation, oppression and suffering, are also paradigmatic of those who are radically humble” (p.19). From the above analysis, several undefined issues concerning who the poor are emerged but the fact remains that poverty and wealthy are beyond economical in actual sense of it, it involves social and religious. These levels of conceptual approaches to poverty and wealthy are seen in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Poverty in Hebrew language and religion of Israel denotes two states of lack: lack of economic resources and material goods; and political and legal powerlessness and oppression. That is to say that poverty is viewed in Hebrew language and religion in terms of economic deprivation and social dispossession. Behind the Greek word, *πτωχος*, lies a Hebrew term and its variants as **אֲנִי** (*ani*), **אָנָּה** (*ana*), **אָנָּו** (*anaw*) and **דָּל** (*dal*) (Okunoye, 2013). These words describe a condition of economic lack or insufficiency. It can be used for the needy, afflicted, distressed and wretched, suffering ill-treatment or social distress. Other words are *ebyon* – for the alms beggar and *resh* – for the famished in want and impoverished. Therefore there are five main Hebrew terms describing the poor and their conditions. *ani* and *anaw* are the words used to designate the oppressed, the humble, humiliated, weak the economically bankrupt and the poor. *ebyon* is used to describe the poor beggar seeking alms and homeless. *dal* refers to the one who is socially weak, frail and helpless. The poorest Jews left behind during the Babylonian captivity fall into this class. *resh* is a term used in wisdom literature to describe the poor, purely in a socio-economic sense. *misken* refers to the dependent, socially inferior and the beggars.

ani is therefore the Hebrew version of word used in our text, it is the word used in Isaiah which is transposed in Luke 4.16-18. Literally, *ani* is used for a person who is economically poor; oppressed, exploited and suffering from social injustice. The jubilee metaphor in the Luke 4.16-18 supports the use of *ani* since Jesus the messiah is set out to liberate those that are economically and

socially oppressed. That is to say that the term poor referred in the Old Testament as the humiliated, vulnerable, and helpless victims. They could not earn a living or barter for its financial equivalent. They became dependents on the generous who were in the society, serving as slaves or hired servants. Family lands, which were available for farming and animal husbandry, were bought by the few rich fellows from the less privileged masses, depriving them of means of earning a living. Nixon (1999) summarizes the causes of poverty in the Old Testament into seven divisions:

- (a) Natural disaster causing bad harvest
- (b) oppression by powerful neighbours
- (c) vicissitude of life of the fatherless and widows
- (d) landlessness of aliens or Levites
- (e) personal offering of self on sale to slavery
- (f) invasion of enemy nation, and
- (g) extortionate usury.

All can summed up in the word *ani*.

However, there is no single distinct thread of thought in treating the phenomenon of poverty in the history of religion of Israel as Akao (2000) points out. During the period of the Patriarchs, Israelite history knew no distinction between the rich and the poor, for every member of the family or clan had equal rights and status. In Canaan, however, during the monarchy, *Yahwistic* theology came with the view that poverty or misery can only be the sign of man's infidelity and the consequent hot displeasure of Yahweh. But on the eve of the exile, Israelite theology according to Akao (2000) redefined its stance on the issue of direct connection of poverty and suffering with sin and disobedience. In the Writings, the sages tried to make the Israelites know that poverty or misery could be a trial of their faith. From the post-exilic era down to the New Testament period, poverty was no more considered as a curse, but a virtue in ancient Israel. At the settlement in the land of

Canaan, the Israelite society accepted that, poverty had come to stay. Thus, the Old Testament makes general provisions for the care and welfare of the poor and needy in the Israelite society. It does this in the form of legislation in the context of the covenant with Israel. The prophets became very vocal against the ill-treatment of the poor, and declaring Yahweh's hot anger against those who perpetrated it. God defends and protects the poor and oppressed against their enemies. So far, it is understood that poverty consciousness began to manifest itself in the religious or historical life of the Israelites from the monarchical period due to the inequalities brought about by social stratification. But God, who has been claimed to have had preferential option for the poor, put in place various poverty alleviation measures like: tithe, gleanings, giving, interest free loan, jubilee year and sabbatical law (Okunoye, 2013).

Wolff, Lamb and Zur-Szpiro's definition of the concept of poverty is all encompassing and is adopted as a working definition because it is the most suitable of all other definitions. This is because of their views about poverty as "capability deprivation" and therefore should not be discriminated against. They are deprived of basic needs of life does not mean that they are lazy and should not warrant neglect, marginalisation or ill treatments.

Moreover from the understanding of this study, the category of poor people that the researcher advocates for help are: the destitute, the needy and indigents. These are the category of the poor that are worthy of pity or sympathy.

b. Rich/Wealth

Wealth is the condition of being happy and prosperous and of spiritual well-being but the most common usage of the term 'wealth' probably involves the narrower sense of abundance of possession or of valuable products. In other words a rich man is a person who has accumulated

assets and possessions enough for his personal well-being and enjoyment. To be wealthy is to be physically, mentally, economically, socially, and spiritually sound.

It is important to point out that some people do gain wealth by exploitation. However, some wealth is gained through honest means. Sometimes it looks as if New Testament condemns all manner of wealth but if the Bible condemns all wealth, what will happen to those who are rich? Sadly, most often, a sense of shame is imposed on the rich, simply on account of their wealth. The Hebrew word translated as prosperity can mean peace, completeness, safety, health, satisfaction or blessing. Therefore when Bible refers to man as wealthy, it cuts across all aspect of man.

In the time of Jesus, it was a common belief that great wealth was a sign of God's favour and poverty was God's punishment for sin. Indeed some Old Testament verses do reflect the idea that poverty is a natural consequence of foolish actions. However, Jesus denied that wealth is a sign of God's favour or poverty God's punishment for sin. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus stands to support the above idea. The rich man ended up in hell not because he was rich but because of his hard- heartedness towards the beggar Lazarus. His great wealth was obviously not a sign of God's favour. The beggar Lazarus ended up in heaven not because he was poor. His poverty was obviously not a sign of sinfulness nor foolishness. Despite the many warnings against wealth in the Bible, the idea that wealth is a sign of God's favour and that the poor have done something to deserve their condition persists as an undercurrent today that is sometimes used justify a callous attitude toward those who are poor.

However, the true biblical position on wealth is that it is a gift from God to be used in His service. Thus those who have been blessed with wealth beyond their need have a responsibility to share it generously with the less fortunate. It is not that wealth is intrinsically evil or that poverty is blessed

but rather it is a devotion to gathering wealth that is incompatible with the devotion to God. Sometimes riches are wrongly referenced to as mammon

The root of the original language term mammon is not known. Its connection with riches is also uncertain. The mammon is generally understood to denote money or riches. There is no evidence that the expression was ever the name for a specific deity as some may insinuate. It is used especially in biblical terms to show the danger of putting one's trust on money or making wealth master instead of slave. It is used also to remind the rich that riches, particularly money belong to and are subject to economic conditions and is liable to loss and decay. The rich are therefore urged to make judicious use their wealth in assisting the poor and less privileged.

According to Watson (2002), the parable is figuratively fighting against the social injustice and social stratification of Jesus' time that exist in birth upper class and low classes. The Greco-Roman background in which the parable is read was categorized into social strata: Upper class which consisted of the aristocrats, the merchants and the lower class which constitute the peasants and the poor. The upper class in the society was few but was in control of the vast majority of the properties, wealth and power. While rich people have more than enough to eat and drink, the poor on the other hand go hungry and have no assurance of the next meal. The primary teaching of the parable is not about wealth and poverty per se but the gulf that exist between the rich and the poor. The gulf blocks the vision of the rich to see the conditions of Lazarus at the gate. Wright (2008) provides the following definition: Inequality refers to disparities between individuals, groups and nations in access to resources, opportunities, assets and income. Furthermore, they argue that 'economic inequality is particularly significant for people's capacity to have access to and command of resources.

The Watson's view of concept of rich or wealth would be adopted for this study. He defines the idea of Luke's parable of the rich man and Lazarus as figuratively fighting against the social injustice and social stratification of Jesus' time that exist between the upper class and lower class of Greco-Roman world. This study however, intends to dwell on this biblical position of Lucan world to address the social inequality that exists in the contemporary Nigerian society.

Specifically, the rich man in this study represents an individual or group with abundant materials possessions. One who has more than enough are the category of the rich that is being referred to in this study. It is expected that those who has more than enough in the case of the rich man in Lazarus time should share with their poor neighbours in their best possible ways in order to lessen their plight.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is formed on a very simple frame work. Lazarus represents the poor or poverty while the rich man represents the rich and wealth. Poverty and wealth have been studied only in economic perspective until 19th century when the study started to take diverse perspectives. Different schools of economic thoughts have promulgated a range of theories on the study of poverty and riches. Among the different schools of economic thoughts, this study has chosen Karl Marx theory of social class and Theories of Poverty to be adopted in this study.

2.2.1 Karl Marx Theories of Social Class

Karl Marx was one of the first social scientists to focus mainly on social class. His main focus on social class was that one's social class dictates one's social life. Basically, Marx meant that if one is in the upper class, life was one of leisure and abundance, while those in the lower class lived lives of hardship and poverty. According to Marx, there was one social element that would determine

where one fit in the social class hierarchy: those who control the means of production, meaning those who owned the resources necessary to produce what people needed to survive. The wealthy would be the individuals who owned the land and factories. The wealthy would then control all elements of society - including the livelihoods of the lower, working class. The lower, working class would work for hourly wages on the land or in the factories. Marx wanted to better understand how so many people could be in poverty in a world where there was an abundance of wealth. His answer was simple: capitalism. According to him, the wealthy and the working poor have opposing interests and are separated by a vast gulf of wealth and power, making class conflict inevitable. The exploitation of the poor by the rich groups in the society may also occur via the quality of the environment; for example, the poor tend to suffer most from air pollution normally generated by the wealthier groups living in their residential locations.

In his class structure, Marx distinguishes one class from another on the basis of two criteria: ownership of the means of production and control of the labour power of others. From this, Marx states that society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other:

- i. Capitalists or the bourgeoisie own the means of production and purchase the labour of others.
- ii. Workers or proletariats do not own any means of production or ability to purchase the labour power of others. Rather, they sell their own labour power. Class is thus determined by property relations, not by income or status. These factors are determined by distribution and consumption, which mirror the production and power relations and classes. The manifesto of the communist party describes two additional classes that decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry.

- iii. A small, transitional class known as the *pitife bourgeoisie* own sufficient means of production but do not purchase labour power. Marx's communists manifesto fails to properly define the *pitife bourgeoisie* beyond 'small capitalist'.
- iv. The dangerous class or *Lumpenproletariat*, "the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of the old society" (Dar, 1998).

Karl Marx based his conflict theory on the idea that modern society has only two classes of people: the *bourgeoisie* and the proletariat. The bourgeoisie are the owners of the means of production, the factories, business and equipment needed to produce wealth. The proletariat are the workers. According to Marx, the bourgeoisie in capitalist societies exploit workers. The owners pay them enough to afford food and a place to live and workers who do not realize they are being exploited, have a false consciousness or a mistaken sense that they are well off. They think they can count on their capitalist bosses to do what was best for them.

Marx foresaw, a workers' revolution. As the rich grew richer, Marx hypothesized that workers would develop a true class consciousness, or a sense of shared identity based on their common experience. The workers would unite and rise up in a global revolution.

In his Marxian class theory, Marx asserts that individual's position within a class hierarchy is determined by his or her own role in the production process and argues that political and ideological consciousness is determined by class position. A class is those who share common economic interests and engage in collective action which advances those interests, within Marxian class theory, the structure of the production process forms the basis of class construction.

To Marx, a class is a group with intrinsic tendencies and interests that differ from those of other groups within society, the basis of a fundamental antagonism between such groups. For

example, it is in the labourers' best interest to maximize wages and benefits and in the capitalist's best interest to maximize profit at the expense of such, leading to a contradiction within the capitalist system, even if the labourers and the capitalists themselves are unaware of the class interest.

Marxian class theory has been open to a range of alternate positions, most notably from scholars such as Thompson and Tronti (1984). Both Thompson and Tronti view class consciousness within the production process precedes the formation of productive relationships. In this sense, Marxian class theory often relates to discussion over pre-existing class struggles.

Karl Marx class theory derives from range of philosophical schools of thought including Left Hegelianism, Scottish Empiricism, Anglo-French political-economics. Marx's view of class originated from a series personal interests relating socialization and human struggle, whereby the formation of class structure relates to acute historical consciousness. Political-economics also contributed to Marx's theories, centring on the concept of the 'origin of income' where society is divided into three sub-groups: Renter, capitalist and worker. This construction is based on David Richardo's theory of capitalism. Marx strengthened this with a discussion over veritable class relationships.

Marx sought to define class as embedded in productive relation rather than social status. His political and economics thought developed towards an interest in production as opposed to distribution and this henceforth became a central theme in his concept of class.

In his presentation of class struggles, the freeman and the slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf guild – master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a

fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstruction of society at large or in the common ruin of the contending classes. The modern bourgeois society that has sprouted from the ruins of feudal society has not done away with class antagonism. It has but established new classes, new conditions of oppression, and new forms of struggle in place of the old ones. The epoch of the bourgeoisie possesses however this distinctive feature. It has simplified class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great classes directly facing each other, bourgeoisie and proletariat communist manifesto.

Marx established conflict as the key driving force of history and the main determinant of social trajectories (Kingston, 1998). However, in order to understand the nature of class conflict, it is necessary to first understand that such conflict arises from a unified class interest, also known as class consciousness. Class consciousness is an aspect of Marxist theory referring to the self-awareness of social classes, the capacity to act in its own rational interests or measuring the extent to which an individual is conscious of the historical tasks their class (or class allegiance) sets for them.

Moreover, the objective interests of classes are fundamentally in opposition; consequently, those opposing interests and consciousness eventually lead to class conflict. When increasing class conflict is manifested at societal level, class consciousness and common interests are also increased. Consequently, when class consciousness is augmented, policies are organized to ensure the duration of such interest for the ruling class. Here begins the use of the struggle for the political power and classes become political forces.

Since the distribution of political power is determined by power over production or power over capital, it is no surprise that the bourgeois class uses their wealth to legitimize and protect their property and consequently social relations. Thus the ruling class is those who hold the economic power and make decisions. Social class according to Marx pertains

broadly to material wealth which may be distinguished from status class based on honour prestige, religious affiliation and so on. The conditions of capitalism and its class system came together due to variety effective affinities.

Marxists explain the history of civilized societies in terms of war class between those who control production and those who produce the goods or services in the society. The most important transformation of the society for Marxists has been the massive and rapid growth of the proletariat over the last two hundred and fifty years.

Karl Marx's postulations/ hypotheses in this theory however agree with the arguments of this study. In his class structure, Marx was able to distinguish one class from another on the basis of two criteria: ownership of the means of production and control of the labour power of others. That is when ruling class are those who hold the economic power. The ruling class or those with economic power would represent the rich man in the parable while the plebeian, serf or the slave as used by Karl Marx would be represented as Lazarus. Generally, Lazarus represents the poor or the poverty class while the rich man represents the rich and wealthy.

The usefulness of this theory to the study therefore is that it helps to analyse the idea in the Lucan parable that the lack of social and private assets, market failure, barriers to education, immigrant states, poor health and advanced age and other unfavourable conditions constitute to one's social condition in a society. This theory helps to explain reasons why the possession of wealth determines one's position in a society.

Marx adopted classical and neoclassical use of monetary units to measure poverty and wealth. He went on to highlight the influence of incentives on individual behaviour as well as relationships between productivity and income.

Though this theory adopts money-centred and individual stance towards poverty and wealth, the importance is focusing greatly on public goods and inequality. This would be applied to analyse the ill treatments meted to Lazarus by the biblical rich man. It can also be used to analyse how the poor and the rich relate or how resources are distributed in the contemporary Nigerian society. Rucell (2015) pointed out the shock divide between the impoverished working classes who had nothing to sell but their labour and capitalists classes who, by virtue of owning the means of production were able to exploit this labour to their profit. This is a prototype of what is obtainable today. For example, in most Nigerian schools, it is painful to notice that most private schools exploit parents in the name of school fees and pay their teachers pee-nuts at the end of every month.

Karl Marx theories of social class and differentiation do not however advocate that the poor should be marginalized as a result of their being poor. Even though one can contribute to him or her being poor, or social factors may also play role. Marx's argument is only interested and wanted to understand how so many people could be in poverty in a world where there is abundance of wealth. Again, he wondered why the poor are mostly marginalised by the rich simply because they are poor. It is the same wonder that necessitates this research that it seeks to find solutions to. That is why the researcher has adopted this theory as suitable in analysing the problem of this work. Karl Marx theories is relevance to this research in the sense that his idea of classless society and his proposal to checkmate the gap between the poverty- stricken proletariats and over-wealthy bourgeoisies is what this research set to correct.

2.2.2 Theories of Poverty

Theories on the causes of poverty are also adopted to analyse the social inequality that exists between the rich and the poor. The choice of its adoption to supplement Karl Marx theory of

social class is because the scope of the study is Nigeria which is characterized as a developing nation. In developed nations poverty is often seen as either a personal or a structural defect while in a developing countries just like Nigeria, the issue of poverty is more profound due to the lack of governmental funds. Some theories on poverty in the developing world focus on cultural characteristics as retardant of further development. Other theories focus on social and political aspects that perpetuate poverty, perceptions of the poor as having a significant impact on the design and execution of programs to alleviate poverty.

However, development plays a central role to poverty reduction in Nigeria. Some authors feel that the national mind-set itself plays a role in the ability for the country to develop and accordingly reduce poverty. Mariano (2000), one of the proponents of the theory outlines twenty cultural factors, which depending on the cultures view of each can be indicators as to whether the cultural environment is favourable or resistant to development. In turn, Harrison (2000) identifies ten values which like Mariano's factors can be indicative of the nation's developmental environment. Finally, Lindsay (2000) claims the differences between development-prone and development-resistant nations are attributed to mental models (which like values, influence decisions human beings make). Mariano, Harrison and Lindsay, the major proponents of this theory feel that without development oriented values and mind-sets, nations will find it difficult if not impossible to develop efficiently, and that some sort of cultural change will be needed in the third world countries in order to reduce poverty.

Furthermore Mariano (2000) claims that development is a matter of decisions. These decisions, whether they are favourable to economic development or not, are made within the context of culture. All cultural values considered together create "value systems". These systems heavily influence the way decisions are made as well as the reactions and outcomes

of the said decisions. In the same view, Lindsay argues that the decisions of individuals are as a result of mental models. These mental models influence all aspects of human action. Like Mariano's value systems, these mental models which dictate a nation's stance toward development and hence its ability to deal with poverty. He goes further to present two ideal value systems (mental models), one of which has values only favouring development, the other only with values which resist development. Real value systems fluctuate and fall somewhere between two poles, but the developed countries tend to bunch near one end, while underdeveloped countries bunch near the other. Mariano goes on to identify twenty cultural factors on which the two value systems stand in opposition. These factors include such things as the dominant religion, the role of individual in society; the value placed on work; concept of wealth, competition, justice and time, and the role of education.

Moreover, Harrison on his part identifies values, like Mariano's factors, which differ between progressive cultures and static cultures. Religion, value of work, overall justice and time orientation are included in his list, but Harrison also adds frugality and community as important factors. Like Mariano and Harrison, Lindsay also presents patterns of thought which differ between nations that stand at opposite poles of the developmental scale. Lindsay focuses more on economic aspects such as the form of capital focused upon and market characteristics. Key themes which emerge from these lists as characteristic of developmental cultures are: trust in the individual with a fostering of individual strengths, the ability for free thinking in an open, safe environment, importance of questioning/innovation; law is supreme and holds the power, future orientated time frame with an emphasis on achievable, practical goals, meritocracy; an autonomous mind-set with a larger world; strong work ethic is highly valued and rewarded; a microeconomic focus; and a value that is non-economic, but not anti-economic, which is always wanting.

Characteristics of the ideal non-developmental value systems are suppression of the individual through control of information and censorship; present/past time orientation with emphasis on grandiose, often unachievable, goals, macroeconomic focus, access to leaders allowing for easier and greater corruption of law and justice (family and its connections matter most) and a passive mind-set within the larger world.

Mariano, Harrison and Lindsay feel that at least some aspects of development resistant cultures need to change in order to allow underdeveloped nations (and cultural minorities within developed nations) to develop effectively. According to their argument, poverty is fuelled by cultural characteristics within under-developed nations, and in order for the poverty to be brought under control, the underdeveloped nations must move down the development path.

Consequently, various other theorists believe the way poverty is approached, defined and accordingly thought about, plays a role in its perpetuation. Maia (2006) explains that the modern development literature tends to view poverty as agency filled. When poverty is prescribed agency, it becomes something that happens to people. Poverty absorbs people into itself and the people, in turn, become part of the poverty, devoid of their human characteristics. In the same way, poverty according to Maia, is view as an object in which all social relations (and persons involved) are obscured. Issues such as structural fallings, institutionalized inequalities or corruption may be at the heart of a region's poverty.

Appadurai (2004) writes on the terms of recognition which are given to the poor and are what allows poverty to take on this generalized autonomous form. The terms are given to the poor

because the poor lack social and economic capital, and hence have little or no influence on how they are represented and/or are perceived in the larger community.

Furthermore, the term poverty often fails precisely because the context of a region's poverty is removed and local conditions are not considered. The specific ways in which the poor and poverty are recognized are often in a negative light and this tends to an extension of negativity to those who are experiencing it.

Moreover, the environment of poverty is one marked with unstable conditions and a lack of capital (both social and economic) which together create the vulnerability characteristic of poverty. Because a person's daily life is lived within the person's environment, a person's environment determines daily decisions and actions based on what is present and what is not. According to Appadurai (2004), the key to the environment of poverty, which causes the poor to enter into this cycle, is the poor's lack of capacities. Appadurai's idea of capacity relates Hirschman's idea of "voice" and "exit" which are ways in which people can decline aspects of their environment to voice displeasure and aim for change or to leave said aspect of environment. The unstable life of poverty often limits the poor's aspiration levels to that necessity.

Because the capacity to aspire (or lack thereof) reinforces and perpetuates the cycle of poverty. Appadurai claims that expanding the poor's aspiration horizon will help the poor to find both voice and exit. Ways of doing this include changing the terms of recognition and/or creating programs which provide the poor with an arena in which to practice capacities. An example of one such arena may be a housing development built for the poor, by the poor. Through this, the poor are able to not only show their abilities but also gain practice dealing

with governmental agencies and society at large. Through collaborative projects, the poor are able to expand their aspiration level above and beyond tomorrow's meal to the cultivation of skills and the entrance into larger market.

However, the above argument falls in line with the position of this study on the area of providing an enabling environment for the poor so as to better their lives. That is why the researcher added this theory to further help in analysing the problem of this work.

2.3 Empirical Studies

Many authors have done great works on the parable under study. At this juncture however, the study examines the works of these authors and gaps yet to be filled as regards to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Snodgrass (2008) in his attempt to solve the questions that face this unique parable posed his questions as follows: Is it a parable or a story? What is the origin of this story, and what relevance does the story's origin have for interpretation? Who is the principal figure in the story, the rich man or Abraham or Lazarus? Why the rich man does not have a name when the poor man does? Why is one man punished and other rewarded with no reason given? Why does the parable appear only in Luke's Gospel, and does it agree with the setting in chapter 16? Why did God not appear in any of the discussions, but rather Abraham? Where is Hades, is Abraham's bosom synonymous with paradise, is Hades below and Abraham's bosom above? Does rich man's request for water depict having a body in the Sheol? All these questions posed by Snodgrass in attempt to solve the problems encountered in the interpretation of the parable have not in any way done justice to the meaning of the parable. They have nothing to do with the teachings or the message the parable portrays. The questions and their order of presentations have rather concentrated in the origin, relevance and the principal figure of the parable instead of presenting them to address the Lucan contemporary

time or structuring the questions to serve as socio-economic apparatus to define the social inequality that exists between the rich and the poor. That as matter of fact is one of the reasons this study is taken up to present the message as it were, the message being the impoverishment, hunger, harsh economic situation that affected Lazarus to the extent that he could not take care of his deteriorating health condition.

Snodgrass (2008) goes further to assert that the early interpreters of the parable presented its message in the historical sense. He gave some of those early interpreters as John Calvin, Gooding among others. Judging from their presentation of the parable in its historical sense, and that the parable is a real story with actual things and activities of the world beyond the after life. Snodgrass favoured their arguments. Snodgrass favouring of the argument that the parable is a historical fact is not really the problem of this work. The problem therefore is that the issues the parable aims to attack which is the social injustice and economic deprivation as presented by Luke is not taken care of. That is why this study has taken up the task of exposing the real problems of the parable.

Shildrick and Rucell (2015) on their part interpret the parable from sociological standpoint but they argued it from the economic ordering and structure of the society. They argued that one's level of economic possession determines his position in a given society. They maintained that wealth is the result of the decisions that individuals make to work harder. In other words that prosperity is as a result of one's effort and commitment in life. Precisely, that poverty is a result of laziness. This position has not in any way settled the issues raised by the parable. They did not see the parable from the standpoint of how the rich man neglected and impoverish the poor and how they enjoyed the resources that belong to them. This study therefore disagrees that poverty is as a result of laziness, sin, extravagance or gluttony.. The victims of poverty are not

to be blamed for their condition and should be not be segregated against or their rights denied. The causes of poverty are inequality in money and opportunity.

Kreitzer (1992) gives a comparative analysis of Hades imagery in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. He centres his arguments on the great reversal of the fortunes of the rich man and Lazarus. He further relates the parable to the apocryphal story of Cain and Abel and suggest that it was that question, asked in Cain and Abel saga, “I am my brother’s keeper?”, that Jesus seems to answer in the parable. He applies his argument on this ground of brother’s keeper by quoting the missionary enterprise of Albert Schweitzer, an European missionary to Africa thus:

Albert Schweitzer left his position of professor in the University of Strasbourg, his academic work and playing of organ and went as missionary doctor to Equatorial Africa on humanitarian ground. He equates *Davies* to Europeans and Lazarus as Africa. He places his heart on the poor at the gate. (p.142).

Kreitzer’s argument that *Davies* represents the Europeans and Lazarus as Africa is not really good interpretation of the parable. This study maintains the real challenge the parable addresses is the social dichotomy poverty poses of which Luke was advocating. Even in African we have *Davies* who are rich and *Lazarus* who are poor living in the same community.

Neusner and Avery-peck (2003) on their part argues that the parable has a strong inter-textually relationship to other texts especially Enoch 22. Also modern scholars like Bauckham (1991), Snodgrass (2008) and Grobel (1960) insist that Jesus copied this parable from varied cultures over thousands of years about trips to the realm of the dead. Unfortunately, these scholars’ arguments on source criticisms are considered insufficient to

address the parable. Instead of criticising the sources of which the parable originated, this study considers it necessary to further research on the parable to see how it can be applied to lessen the plights of the poor.

Cave (1968) argues that Lazarus represents the Gentiles while the rich man represents the Jews. Cave's argument does not consider that the world of first century Palestine and the Roman Empire into which Jesus was born was an occupied territory. The Roman officials were the landlords while the Jews were subjects. Consequently the Jews were like slaves except very few who colluded with the Romans like the Pharisees and Tax-Collectors. Therefore his argument has not solved the problem of the parable. Whether Lazarus represents the Gentiles and the rich man Jews is inconsequential to the message that Luke intends to convey in presenting the parable which this study is researching into.

Ottuh (2014) in his part presents how Lazarus was being molested by the rich man. He maintains that Lazarus ill treatment was a typical example of how Jews were being molested by the Roman officials. He puts it thus:

The characteristics of allowing domesticated wild animals to harass or kill a slave or prisoner is common to the Romans hence, the rich man allowing dog to lick and injure Lazarus' wounds is a portrait of a Roman official who enjoys human-animal sports as pleasure. (p.38).

Ottuh (2014) may seem right in his argument yet he may sum assumption which cannot be practically seen in the parable. The parable is not specific whether the dogs were causing harm to Lazarus or that the dogs were licking the wounds of Lazarus to keep away flies. The issue there that Luke wants to portray as understood by the researcher is that the poor should be loved and cared for instead of being molested or ill-treated. This position agrees with

Marshal (1978) who argues that the rich man allowing dogs to lick Lazarus's sores is a portrayal of neglect and wickedness to the starving beggar. Marshal's argument forms in line with the focus of this research which targets on the wickedness associated with the hardship and untold difficulties that are meted on the poor in Nigeria.

Snodgrass (2008) further argues that the parable has strong relationship with eschatology and stewardship of wealth. He argues that though scholars caution that the parable is not intended to give description of life after death, yet its relevance for future eschatology cannot be overlooked. He concludes that the parable does not tell us how the wealthy are to assist the poor, but it is insist that the poor are brothers and sisters to of the wealthy and that the injustice of the juxtaposition of wealth and poverty cannot be tolerated. He is explicit that the parable is teaching about humanitarian services which are helping to alleviate the plight of the poor. Even though Snodgrass' argument that the parable has a relationship with eschatology which did not prove as a matter of emphasis on whether the rich man's torment in hades was as a result of his flamboyant and ostentatious life. His second point on the stewardship of wealth has quite agreed with the researcher's contentions that there should be a positive relationship between the rich and poor in every society.

Furthermore, Secombe (1983) in his standpoint on the issue maintains that Lazarus possesses the qualities of poverty which include: hunger, homeless, and nakedness but the rich man blocked his heart that he did nothing over the situation, he concludes that the rich man's neglect of Lazarus accounted for the rich man's punishment. Incidentally, Secombe's argument is exactly the ideas that this study intends to further investigate.

Many scholars have offered levels of interpretations to Parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Some of the interpretations favour reversal of fortunes, judgment, life after death and attitudes towards wealth and poverty. Derreth (1960) in his work agrees that the parable is not only teaching about reversal fortune or afterlife but also teachings about charity and almsgiving. Derreth holds strongly that the punishment of the rich man in the Hades was as a result of his wickedness and failure to welcome the starving Lazarus. He writes:

Here the rich man is wicked, dining sumptuously every day with a starving beggar at his door (the very epitome of anti-social behaviour), and though warned against this by the law and the prophets, in which he was educated, does not heed that relatively less urgent pressure. Failure to deal righteously with *mammon* leads to ‘Hell (p.373).

He concludes by giving its high eschatological teaching, “that the kingdom of Heaven is mixed with this world, inextricably until the end of the age is after all the message of the parable and numerous other parables” (p.375). Derreth’s work on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a masterpiece, yet his conclusion that the rich man’s fate in Hades was as a result of his wickedness is misleading and many scholars opposed this fact on the ground that the parable did not explicitly points so. The parable is not explicit on whether the rich man fate in hades was as a result of his wickedness to Lazarus. The punishment might be as a result of neglect and refusal to see poverty and suffering.

Hock (1987) narrated scholars’ diverse views on the presentation of the parable and frown that many interpreters seem to give wrong interpretation of the parable. He argues thus:

Scholars are quick to rule out the rich man’s principal characteristic, his wealth as the reason for his judgment or to impugn his life style of wearing fine clothing and feasting daily or to assure that the rich man had gained his wealth or maintained it

from usury, fraud or exploration of slaves. No, the parable is said to give no explicit reason for the rich man's condemnation to be in fact of an amoral description. (p.111).

Though many scholars claim that the rich man's clothing suggests extravagant luxury, his daily feasting debauchery, yet the parable is not explicit about the condemnation of the rich man's life style. Hock (1987) maintains that if the rich man is at all responsible for his torment, it is only because; scholars say he had neglected the unfortunate Lazarus.

From the setting of the parable, death brings both the rich man and Lazarus into a new situation which is described and interpreted. The difficulty lies in interpreting the interpretation. Bauckham (1998) opines some interpreters focusing on verse 25, have discerned a doctrine of simple reversal: the rich are damned because they are rich, and the poor are blessed because of their poverty, hence the claim that Luke has an Ebionite outlook or has made use of an Ebionite source. To uphold to the doctrine of reversal is out of place, the doctrine that holds that if one is rich in this world, he will be poor in the next world. The research tends to disprove the doctrine of reversal and holds that reversal is not the central message of the parable.

Hock (1987) further argues that the parable portrays more of Greco-Roman world. He writes, "The parable, however, does not merely describe Lazarus and the rich man, it also takes a particular stance toward them and their social world, viewing their poverty and wealth in a specific way" (p.455). Hock is of the opinion that the parable is not talking about the individual lives of the rich man and Lazarus but two figures to represent two groups of the people that existed in the time of Jesus. He echoes what Osborn (2009) wrote about the life in Palestine during the time of Jesus. Osborn asserts thus:

The world of first-century Palestine, against which the Gospel narratives are set and the meaning of Jesus' life must finally be reckoned, was divided into two broad categories of people: the rich few and the poor many. The rich minority included: several high-priestly clans, who controlled the Temple in Jerusalem and exercised a monopoly over the economy of worship and sacrifice; the Herodians, who ruled Palestine at Rome's behest and owned more than half of the land; and a small number of other land-owning Jewish aristocrats. These wealthy elites were bitterly resented by the rest of the population, which was comprised of some poor craftsmen, rural priests, farmers, fishermen and others who managed a modest but tenuous existence, and a much larger number of day-labourers, subsistence farmers and socially marginalized groups, who even in the best of times lived on the very edge of survival. The poor majority—the peasant “masses” or “people of the land” in rabbinic literature—were heavily taxed by both secular and religious authorities. They were subjected to frequent exploitation and debt-bondage by state bureaucrats and wealthy creditors. They confronted a situation of increasing crime, family breakdown, environmental stress and untreatable diseases. And they bore the brunt of Rome's degrading and brutal military occupation, which began in 63 BC with Pompey desecrating the Holy of Holies and continued through AD 135 when Hadrian finally decimated Jerusalem once-and-for-all, forcing the surviving Jews into slavery or exile from which they would not regain control of Palestine until the twentieth century. (p.1).

Hock's postulations on the Greco-Roman world and his particular stands that the parable does not portray the individual lives of the rich man and Lazarus have not really done justice to the essence of the parable which according to Secombe (1983), the parable emphasis is on the

right use of possession, even its eschatological implication is applied in the light of the right use of possession.

Marshall (1978) maintains that two themes are combined in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the first is the reversal of fortunes in the next world for the rich and the poor; this sums up the theme found in Luke 1.53 and Luke 6.20-26 and the second is warning for covetousness in Luke 12.13-21. However there are discrepancies in Hock's argument on the social backgrounds of the parable.

Fitzmeyer (1990), in his argument is convinced that the parable falls into two parts verses 29-26 which describe the different lives of the rich man and poor Lazarus and then their complete and permanent reversal of fortunes after death, and verse 27-31 which go on to assert that a warning to the rich man's brothers by someone from the dead is unnecessary since the brothers need to listen to Moses and the prophets. Likewise, the question about extrabiblical parallels to the parable has been disputed among the scholars over one hundred years ago. Another problematic aspect of the parable is the reason for poor Lazarus change of fortune. Lazarus did not play any principal role in the parable. Nearly everyone looks to the Lazarus whose etymology means God's helps and so all assume that Lazarus' reward comes from his piety or dependence on God.

Then, Hock (1987) suggests that the above interpretation of condemning the rich man and rewarding the poor Lazarus may be sociological, in the sense that Jesus teaching is regarded as that of a poor, rural Galilean carpenter whose experience and context would hardly have put him in touch with the elite culture of the Greco-Roman world. Or interpreter by training may and professionalism can usually more familiar with Jesus sources and culture than with

the broader context of Greco-Roman society. Hock's interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from Jesus sociological perspective is not the message of the parable. The rich man's harsh treatment to Lazarus should not be covered up with the practices of the elite culture of the Greco –Roman world.

Chang (2000) gives the overview of the parable and claims that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16.19-31) begins with a detailed description of the rich man's extravagant and luxurious lifestyle. With such a detailed depiction, Luke is targeting a certain lifestyle for criticism and is emphasizing the striking contrast between the rich and the poor. The parable, from the beginning, has the wide gap between the rich and the poor as its major concern and theme. The parable makes no mention of the moral state of the two characters. Nowhere does it say that the rich man was evil and poor Lazarus was good, or that the rich was an impious unbeliever while Lazarus was a devout believer. The rich man's failure lies in the fact that he did not properly use his wealth for the poor. The haves' surplus property is meant to be shared with the have-nots.

There is one thing more to keep in mind: give, but without any expectation to receive, for there will be compensation in the end. This compensation in the end is also what the parable is trying to say. Luke has already mentioned the eschatological compensation in Luke 6.27-38. This becomes clearer when compared with the Gospel of Matthew. While Matthew presents the message of love to one's as conditions to becoming a child of God Mat. 5.38-48, Luke concludes the passage on loving enemies by saying that we will be a reward in the end Luke 6.35, 38. Thus, Luke says, 'Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again' (6.30) and 'do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return Luke 6.35. This is the mercy that Luke means. We are called upon to be merciful,

just as God is merciful Luke 6.36, not to be perfect, as our heavenly God is perfect (Matt 5.48). These three parables emphasize that property is not for possession or accumulation, but for distribution and sharing. This is the focus of this research. The idea is to use the parable to encourage the rich to help the poor in order to lessen the plights of the poor in the contemporary society, Nigeria and South –East of Nigeria in particular.

Consequently, Nwankwo (2015) has it that Nigeria has one of the world's highest economic growth rates based on the nation's economic report in 2014 by the World Bank, yet poverty still remains significant in the country. Nwankwo's position on the inability of Nigerian government to harness its rich resources to better the lives of its citizens is correct, but stopping at encouraging the government to channel its massive wealth to its huge population is incomplete without advocating for mutual respect amongst the rich and the poor in the society. Whether the country applies its rich resources to develop its economy or not poverty cannot be completely eradicated. Therefore, this study intends to further advocate that the issue of poverty or wealth should not determine one's social life in a society.

Okediadi (2010) on his part reacted to the report of Nwankwo over the poor distribution of the country's rich resources among the citizens. Okediadi went further to argue that the government's higher spending in urban areas and its attendant poverty rates in the rural areas renders the rural dwellers vulnerable to hardship and poverty. Okediadi however could be correct in his argument, but this study considers it more appropriate also to encourage fair treatment and mutual relationship to all irrespective of one's social class or possession.

Uchendu (2009) in his observation, maintains that the fiscal decentralisation of the government system from state to local governments with their considerable autonomy, including 50% of government revenues, as well as responsibility for providing public services accounts for rampant corruption which has hitherto hindered past alleviation efforts

to a large extent since resources which could pay for public goods or directed towards investments (and so create employment and other opportunities) for citizens are being misappropriated because of the lack of stringent regulatory and monitoring system. No doubt that Uchendu's observation could also account for the reason for poverty in Nigeria. The researcher however, discovered the gap in Uchendu's observation which is his inability to address the social inequality that exists between the rich and the poor and the rich in the country and possible solutions to addressing them. Even the poverty reduction programmes cannot also take the care of this problem of social inequality between the two groups.

Therefore there should be tolerance and mutual cooperation irrespective of whether one is rich or poor. This will be promoted by the government, citizens, church and society at large irrespective of one's religious or ethnic persuasions.

Summary of Literature Review

A number of studies of the biblical material have been done on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Great numbers of authors have put their best in trying to give their interpretation on the parable under review. Each of the Scholars admits the parable's difficulty in the interpretation, however, of all the parables of Jesus, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is the most difficult one to interpret. Its uniqueness and ambiguity is to point out as found only in Luke, the true meaning of the parable. From all the study has gathered, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus begins with a detailed description of the rich man's extravagant and luxurious lifestyle.

With such a detailed depiction, Luke is targeting a certain lifestyle for criticism and is emphasizing the striking contrast between the rich and the poor. Thus the parable, from the

beginning to the end focuses on the wide gap between the rich and the poor as its major concern and theme.

In this review, the conceptual, Theoretical and Empirical basis of the parable was given an appraisal. Some scholars use philosophical and psychological approach to the study of the parable. Most scholars use socio-historical critical approach of biblical exegesis, while others use socio-economic approach. The review also shows that the study can go beyond the Gospels tradition but also with the Old Testament, New Testament and Extra- Biblical literatures. The review discovers that most scholars have not done justice to the lesson the parable intends to convey.

The lesson as convinced by the researcher has to do with the socio-economic inequality and unhealthy social interaction that exists between the poor and the rich. The researcher intends to use the lesson of the parable to address the increasing harsh and poverty rate in Nigeria and South-Eastern Nigeria in particular. Through this, lasting solutions would be proffered. This as a matter of fact is the reason for this research lacuna the researcher wants to fill. One could perceive the serious relationship between the socio-economic background of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus and Nigerian socio-economic contemporary society. In the current context, socio-economic inequality is getting more extreme, with those at the very top growing ever richer while the majority is finding life increasingly harsh and poverty rates are increasing.

CHAPTER THREE

THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE AND NIGERIAN SOCIAL SYSTEM

The Greco-Roman world and Nigeria society shares some common views as regards to poverty, inequality and social interaction. The reason for such in the two worlds is not due to lack of resources, but the ill use, misallocation and misappropriation of such resources. At the root is a culture of corruption combined with political system that keeps society in daily struggles of the average citizens. Nigeria for example is not a poor country yet millions are living in hunger. The Lucan Greco-Roman world was not also poor as Roman district but their understanding that the poor are meant to suffer penury attracted the attention of Luke who stood against such practice as an ardent follower of Jesus Christ. This chapter however x-rays the historical background of both Luke gospel and Nigerian society so as to see a way of finding a lasting solution to the widening gap that exists between the rich and the poor in Nigeria.

3.1 The Background of the Gospel of Luke

The gospel of Luke is written in and for a society which was seriously under great, physical, economical, ethical, religious, and political stress; a world of social status and social stratification; and a world where eschatological anticipation is rampant. A world defined around power and privilege and is measured by a complex of phenomena: religious purity, family heritage, landownership, vocation, ethnicity, gender, education, and age. It was into this society that Jesus was born and within this society that he began his public ministry. Luke presents Jesus as a social reformer who stood to fight the unjust dichotomy between the very few rich and a large population of poor who lived little above the hunger line, together with its gross exploitation and social injustice. In this case, the poor in Lucan community includes the sick, beggars (Luke 16:20), lepers, the outcast (Luke 17:12ff), widows and the likes of them. These categories of people rely on the mercies of the rich. The parable of the rich man and

Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) in particular is situated in the above socio-political, socio-economic, socio-religious backgrounds. Probably this harsh economic situation could have affected Lazarus to the extent that he could not even take care of his deteriorating health condition.

Luke sought to produce more accurate historical document of the life, and works of Jesus, the Saviour, including the beginning of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome. He is aware of other historical books about the life and works of Jesus, consequently he used large portion of Mark and adopted narrative sequence framework as his own. The major way he sought to improve Mark was not to correct Mark but rather he tried to complete Mark's account by enriching it with other important Jesus traditions which Mark lacked (Chinweokwu, 2002). Luke's gospel exhibits some distinctive characteristics from other gospels. There are some unique characteristics, relative differences and emphases when compared with other gospels. The most noticeable uniqueness of Luke is it is also a gospel with sequel, Acts of the Apostles. In addition, Luke includes several unique parables that are well known for example, the parables of Good Samaritan, prodigal son, rich man and Lazarus, Pharisees and tax collector. More than other gospels, Luke highlights the last week of Jesus' earthly life.

The outstanding characteristic of this gospel is its universality, universality because of the inclusion of those whose religious and social status kept at the periphery of the salvation. Luke's emphasis is on the universality of Jesus Christ and His salvation: "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10) is the axis of this gospel. For Luke, all the barriers that divide men are broken down and Jesus is for all men. The parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.30-37) and a grateful Samaritan leper (Luke 17.11-19) are the shining examples. John can record a saying that the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans (John

4.9), but Luke refuses to shut the door to any man. If there is any book that is filled with good news for everybody, the gospel of Luke is the book.

Luke also shows interest of the participation of the Gentiles in the kingdom he came to establish. And so Luke tells of the great word of Jesus “Men will come from east and west, from north and south and sit at the table in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13.20). He is also interested in the poor and the outcast. Luke is very much familiar with the word “all”. All men flesh shall see the salvation of God (Luke 3.4-6). Luke's special materials clearly show that the author was greatly concerned with the poor and the excluded. That is why the Gospel of Luke is often referred to as the Gospel of the poor and the 'Gospel of the outcast.

It is also a gospel with sequel. That is to say that it was Luke who also wrote Acts (compare Luke 1:1-4 with Acts 1:1) and travelled with Paul (note the "we" sections in Acts 16:10-17; 20:4-15; 21:1-18, and 27:1-28:16). The gospel is the first part of the two-volume work covering both the life of Christ and the history of the early church which might be called Luke-Acts. By continuing his literary work into the Acts of the Apostles, Luke not only introduces Jesus and his ministry, but also how that ministry relates to significant events in the early Church. This enables Luke to discuss how God bought salvation in Jesus, how the Church preached Jesus and how it is carried out its mission to both the Jews and Gentile. His key message is, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He presents Jesus Christ as the compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them, and die for them.

It is a Gospel for individuals, crowds, women and children, men, poor, rich, and sinners along with saints. Luke is named only three times in the New Testament: in Col 4:14; 2 Tim 4:11; and

Philemon 24. He was probably a Gentile (compare Col 4:11 and 14) and was trained as a physician. No wonder he began his book with detailed accounts of the births of two important babies (John and Jesus). No wonder he emphasized Christ's sympathy for hurting people. He wrote with the mind of a careful historian and with the heart of a loving physician.

The Gospel of Luke was written for Theophilus (Luke 1.1-4), probably a Roman official who had trusted Christ and now needed to be established in the faith. It's also possible that Theophilus was a seeker after truth who was being taught the Christian message, because the word translated instructed in Luke 1:4 gives us our English word catechumen, someone who is being taught the basics of Christianity.

To Luke, the life and message of Christ were so important that many books had already been written about Him, but not everything in them could be trusted. Luke wrote his Gospel so that his readers might have an accurate and orderly narrative of the life, ministry, and message of Jesus Christ. Luke had carefully researched his material, interviewed eyewitnesses, and listened to those who had ministered the Word.

3.1.1 Authorship of the Gospel of Luke

It has been agreed that the writer of the Gospel of Luke is Luke until recent times when many scholars started to raise issues against this backdrop. The tradition that supports the authorship of Luke is based on the fact that Luke was the beloved physician (Col. 4.14), the friend and travelling companion of Paul during parts of his second and third missionary journeys. This tradition is also based on the fact that the vocabulary and style of writing are classical and signifies that the writer is a well-educated person. Even Luke's Greek-language style attracts some criticisms. Cara (2016) has this to say: the prologue Luke 1.1-4 is written in an elevated

style, most of chapter 1-2 has a heavy Semitic sense, and rest of the Luke is written in language similar to the Septuagint, which has less of a Semitic sense.” (p.94). The use of medical terms points to the fact that the writer is a medical personnel.

However, many modern scholars have questioned this tradition. Morris (1998) for example says that ascription of authorship of the Gospel of Luke to Luke is a guess work; on the ground that there are some facts both internal and external that contradict the above tradition. The scholars who question the authorship of Luke based their arguments on the fact that Luke was not, a person of such prominence in the early church as to have two volumes attributed to him without reason (Morris, 1998).

Secondly, nowhere is the name Luke mentioned in the gospel of Luke and Acts, therefore this book would have been impossible to be published without author’s name attached to such well peened volumes. Thirdly, if the prologue gave the name to the person to whom the dedication was addressed, the name of the author could hardly be omitted from the title.

Fourthly, the tradition recorded in the preface shows that the author was not an eyewitness of the things he records, though he had searched out evidence from those who were (Ellis, 1974). He was clearly a careful writer and a cultured man, but not one of Jesus’ first followers. For the person to write or intend to write such must have been a follower of Christ or an eye witness.

Fifthly, the ‘we’ passages in Acts suggest the author is a companion of Paul in Rome but not specific about that companion. Luke is among other companions of Paul. This leaves us with a small group, Titus, Demas, Crescens, Jesus Justus, Epaphras, Epaphroditus and Luke. Therefore it could be any of the companions apart from Luke. Worse still as Green (1992) puts

it; “despite the wide selection of potential candidates, early church tradition singles Luke out as the author of the gospel of Luke and by Ad 200 this tradition had become fixed without any hint of contrary opinion” (p. 496). Therefore, from all the evidences listed above, many scholars conclude that there are no good reasons for holding that Luke is the author of the Gospel of Luke.

Still on the case of the authorship of the gospel of Luke, Kummel (1975) has this to say:

While virtually all conservative and critical scholars agree that Luke the physician and companion of Paul wrote the Gospel of Luke, the vast majority of the critical scholars do not agree that the author is actually Luke. The author of the Gospel of Luke is obviously a total stranger to the theology of Paul. This conclusion is based primarily on comparing Acts of the Apostles and the ‘authentic’ Pauline epistles, and on the broad assumptions of the compatibility of the synoptic Gospels and Paul. The authors of Luke and Pauline epistles have different theological ideas and hence cannot be one person. Therefore the author could not have been a companion of Paul. The standard conclusion is that the author is unknown except to say that he was a Gentile with a good education and could not have been Paul’s companion (p.198).

However, while the evidences are quite strong on one hand and falls short of final proof on the other, yet no suitable alternative has been suggested. It may be suggested that it is possible that Luke may be a secret disciple of Jesus before his encounter with Paul, therefore making it possible that Luke is the author. Probably this made him write in a vivid manner, the ministry of Jesus. And being a physician he knew very well the stress associated with poverty and consequently gathered many materials on poverty and right use of possession more than the other gospel writers.

Whether Luke was a Jew, a Gentile or a Semite form another basis of debate, most scholars see Luke as a Gentile; others debate whether he is a pure Gentile or a non-Jewish Semite. Ellis (1974) is exceptional; he argues that Luke was a Hellenistic-Jewish Christian. He based his arguments on the fact that Luke's knowledge of the Old Testament is extensive. Another fascinating thing about Luke is the way he emphasizes the importance of the Temple and of Jerusalem. He begins and ends his Gospel with people in the Temple at Jerusalem (Morris, 1998). Fitzmyer (1990) suggests Luke was a Semite arguing from the evidence of the Colossian 4 test.

a. Proof for the authorship of Luke

However there are proofs from both internal and external evidences to support the authenticity of the authorship of Luke.

i. Proof of internal evidence

The following points from internal evidence confirm the authenticity of Luke's authorship:

1. The Authorship of Luke is authenticated by the fact of Luke's association with Paul. It is universally agreed that there is a general affinity between Paul and Luke Col. 4.14.
2. Both Paul and Luke, in their teaching, bring into special prominence the promise of redemption made to the whole human race, without distinction of nation or family, ignoring in the gracious offer all privilege whatsoever. "All flesh shall see the salvation of God" (Luke 2.10). Many of the parables told only by Luke illustrate the love of Jesus shown in seeking the lost. The appearances of the risen Jesus after the

resurrection almost exactly correspond with those related by Paul in 1 Cor. 15. This shows vividly that the author is a close companion of Paul.

3. The language of Luke, both in the Gospel and Acts, is very largely impregnated with technical medical words - words which none but a trained physician would have thought of using; words, too, employed in the general story in the course of relation of events not connected with healing a disease or any medical subject; the very words, in fact, which were common in the phraseology of the Greek medical schools, and which a physician, from his medical training and habits, would be likely to employ.

4. All events very closely connects the third Gospel with Paul, receives additional confirmation when the teaching and occasionally the very expressions of Luke's Gospel are compared with the teaching of the epistles of Paul. For example, the very important section of Luke's Gospel which describes the institution of the Lord's Supper is closely and even in verbal coincidences and resembles Paul's account of the same blessed sacrament (compare 1 Cor. 15:3 with Luke 24:26, 27).

ii. Proof of External Evidences

Numerous extra-biblical texts attest the authenticity of Luke's authorship. These proofs are based on the statement in Colossians 4.14.

1. "And Luke, who was a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, and who was not slightly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us two books divinely inspired, proofs of the art of healing souls, which he won from them" (Eusebius, 'Hist. Eccl.,' 3. 4).

2. "Luke, a physician of Antioch, not unskilled in the Hebrew language, as his works show, was a follower of the Apostle Paul, and the companion of all his wanderings.

He wrote a Gospel of which the same Paul makes mention." (St. Jerome, 'De Vir. Illustr.,' c. 7).

3. "The Gospel according to Luke was dictated by the Apostle Paul, but written and edited by Luke, the blessed apostle and physician" (Synopsis Pseudo-Athanasii, in Athanasii 'Opp.').
4. Irenaeus, writing in Southern Gaul circa A.D. 180 A.D., says, "Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the gospel preached by him (Paul)" ('Adv. Haeres.,' 3. 1);
5. Eusebius, the Church historian, writing a little more than a century later, and who spent much of his life in collecting and editing the records of the first beginnings of Christianity, relates that "Luke, who was a native of Antioch, and by profession a physician, for the most part a companion of Paul, and who was not slightly acquainted with the rest of the apostles, has left us two books divinely inspired.... One of these is the Gospel.... And it is said that Paul was accustomed to mention the Gospel according to him, whenever in his Epistles speaking, as it were, of some Gospel of his own, he says according to my gospel" ('Hist. Eccl.,' 6:25; see also St. Jerome, 'De Vir. Illustr.,' c. 7).

The above-quoted references from Eusebius, Jerome, and the pseudo-Athanasius, tell us that the words of Paul (Col 4:14), when he referred to his friend Luke as "the beloved physician," very generally coloured all traditions in the early Church respecting Paul as the writer of the third Gospel (Kummel, 1975).

3.1.2 Dating of the Gospel

There are various arguments for the date of the composition of Luke. These arguments can be seen in three selections: those who claim that Luke was written around Ad 62- 63; other suggested dates are Ad 75-85; and others argue early second century. Those who agree early sixties based their argument on the ground that Luke was a companion of Paul as in Col. 4.14 and consequently put the following considerations: First, there was no mention of the persecution under Nero that began somewhere around Ad 64 therefore it might have been written earlier before that. Acts ends with Paul in prison. If Luke knew of Paul's release or martyrdom he would have mentioned it. Second, the pastoral letters seem to show that Paul visited Ephesus again. If Luke wrote after that visit he would surely not have left Paul's prophecy that Ephesians would not see him again (Acts 20.25, 38). Third, Luke notes the fulfilment of the prophecy of Agabus (Acts 11.28), if he was writing after 70 Ad, it is logical to expect him to mention somewhere the fulfilment of Jesus prophecy that the city would be destroyed (Luke 21.20) (Carson & Moo, 1992). Fifth, Acts shows no knowledge of the Pauline Epistles and so must be written earlier. Any Christian interested enough in Paul to write about him would have made use of those epistles. Sixth, in Acts no event after Ad 60 is mentioned. There are no references, for example, to the death of James (Ad 62) or of Paul or to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Those who favour 75-85 argue that: the language of the eschatological discourse seems to show that Luke was writing after the fall of Jerusalem (19.43; 21.26, 24). If Luke used Mark therefore must be earlier than Ad 68. Luke. 1:1 says that many have written before him and they are not later than 70 Ad. Thus Mark present it in futuristic terms, for example when you see the desolating sacrilege set up where it ought no to be (Mark. 13.14), Lucan version present it in present tense (Luke 21:20).

The third group of scholars argue that second century should be the date of the composition of Luke Gospel. Such views put this Gospel close to the time of Marcion who based his canon on an expurgated vision of Luke. From every calculation on the bases that Luke made use of Mark and Acts was written after Luke, it is likely that the dating of Luke is mid-sixties.

3. 1. 3 Language

It is agreed that Luke wrote his work in fine Greek and polished style. A fascinating aspect of his style was his ability to adopt the Septuagint when it suited his purposes. Consequently, language of the Gospel of Luke is argued to be a mixture of classical Greek, Hebraic and Aramaic. However some scholars argue that Luke language and style are not coherent or consistent. Morris, (1998) puts it this way: Linguistically, this Gospel falls into three sections, the preface (1.1-4) is written in good classical style. It shows what Luke is capable of, but thereafter he forsake the style altogether. The rest of chapters 1 and 2 have a strong Hebraic flavour. From chapter 3.1 on the Gospel is written in a type of Hellenistic Greek strongly reminiscent of the Septuagint. The vocabulary is extensive, and Luke uses 266 words which are not found elsewhere in the New Testament (Morris, 1998). Nonetheless, Luke's literary expression is very unique among the New Testament writers. He expressed himself in the most grammatically correct and polished *Koine* Greek of all the New Testament writers, with the possible exception of the author of Hebrews (Utley, 2013).

3.1.4 The Purpose

Numerous plausible possible intentions of Luke's Gospel have been suggested by New Testament scholars. These suggestions are group under the following: Historical, Apologia, Theological, Delayed Parousia, and Pastoral.

1. Historical: The main intent of the gospel of Luke is to give accurate history of the life and ministry of Jesus. Chinweokwu (1991) puts it this way, “Luke sought to produce historical document of the life of Jesus, the saviour, including the beginning of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome” (p.125). Though in recent times, Luke’s accuracy as a historian has been questioned by some New Testament scholars. They also alleged that Luke’s writing contains errors of geographical, cultural and political facts. For example, it has been alleged that Augustus Caesar never ordered any census in Luke 2.1-5, and even if there had been such census, there would have been no need for Joseph and Mary to go up to Bethlehem to register for it. Nonetheless, non-accuracy of Luke’s historical facts does not null that historical information is one of the major intent of the gospel.
2. Apologia: Luke also wrote this gospel to serve as an apologia, a defence of Christianity. He wanted to correct the wrong impression in the Roman world that Christianity was a dangerous and subversive movement. Luke was very much concerned to portray Christianity as an apolitical movement and as not being a subversive sect of revolutionaries’ intent on overthrowing imperial Roman government.
3. Theological: Luke also had theological motive in his writing. Luke more than other synoptic writers showed a deeper understanding of the person and work of Christ. Luke brings out the theological significance in history.
4. Delayed Parousia: It has been suggested that Luke’s aim of writing was to respond to the delayed second coming of Jesus. Conzelmann (1969) is particular to this position.

He suggests that Luke wrote to modify the current Christian expectation of the return of Christ and relaxed the note of the urgent immediacy. This he said served two purposes: first, it helps him to cope with the crisis of which disappointed expectations fostered. Secondly the extension of Jesus return is a time in which God's saving purpose is achieved through the church.

5. Pastoral: It also has been rightly suggested that Luke's purpose of writing is pastoral, to aid the church by proclaiming the gospel and by offering pastoral counsel and encouragement to his followers.

The above suggest that Luke is a crusader against social injustice and social strata that are prevalent during his time and he stands to fight and form of social structure that is against the kingdom in which Jesus came to establish.

Green (1992) further suggests four reasons why Luke's Gospel was written:

1. The question of Salvation. How could Gentiles be included as God's people on equal bases with the Jews, extending even to matters like sharing table fellowship and eliminating the necessity of circumcision?
2. The apparent paradox of the claim that God's plan was at work while the Jews, the most natural recipients for the good news were largely responding negatively. How could God's plan and God's messengers meet to so much hostility?
3. The problem of explaining how the person and teaching of crucified Jesus fit into this plan. How could Jesus continue to exercise a presence and represent the hope of God when he was physically absent? How could church exalt an absent and slain figure and regard him as the centre of God's work?
4. The question of what it means to respond to Jesus. What is required and what can one expect for such commitment? How could men and women live until the day Jesus returns?

Luke Gospel and its sequence (Acts) deal with all of these issues. His task is to reassure his readers of the place of the Gentiles in the new community and role of Jesus in God's plan.

Others stated that the author of the Gospel of Luke stated his reasons for the writing of the Gospel of Luke in his prologue in (Luke 1.1-4):

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, 2 just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

In this brief introduction to the Gospel of Luke, Luke puts in place three points of interest. First, Luke writes to explain that in the early days, many people took up the task of setting in order a narrative of the life of Jesus, the Son of God. It would seem by this statement that besides the inspired accounts of Matthew, Mark and John, there were also uninspired writers who “set in order” the events of Jesus’ life either for themselves or for the benefit of their family and friends. The very idea that many people would write about the life of one man indicates that His deeds were worth remembering. Luke however from onset presented Jesus as the central figure in the narrative.

Second, Luke indicates that it was good that he himself should write an account of Christ’s life. He makes this observation based upon certain qualifications that other writers did not have. For instance, he had been in the company of eyewitnesses who had accurately told him the details of the events and again another qualification which appears to go hand in hand

with the first; Luke had a perfect understanding of all these things from the very first that is to say that Luke had accurately followed the events of Jesus' life from the start. Following this line of reasoning, Luke declares that an "orderly account" should be written for "Theophilus".

Third, the statement, "That you may know the certainty" is another main reason for writing. Luke understood that an accurate knowledge of the earthly life of Christ would strengthen the faith of Christians everywhere. When you become well acquainted with good people, you learn to trust them and you are apt to follow their instructions if you know they have your best interest at heart. The clear evidence of Christ's life gives man reason to follow the instructions of the apostles' doctrine. because their doctrine was based upon the facts of Jesus being the Son of God, His perfect fulfillment of God's will, and His love for man.

The above points attract some criticisms. First it is debated whether Theophilus was a Christian or was thinking to becoming one. It is unlikely that Theophilus is only interested in becoming a Christian or is a Roman official who needs Christianity explain to him in order to accept it as a legitimate religion. Too little of the gospel deal with such legal, political concern and too much focuses on such other than evangelism. Luke 1.3-4 suggests that Theophilus had received some instruction. The amount of the detail in Luke-Acts devoted to faithfulness, Jewish-Gentile relations and clinging to the hope of Jesus' return suggests that a Gentile who was experiencing doubt about his association with the new community. Theophilus appears to be a man of rank (Luke 1.3-4). Having associated himself with the church, he is undergoing doubt whether in fact he really belongs in this racially mixed and heavily persecuted community. The Gospel is calling him to remain faithful, committed and expectant, even in the midst of intense Jewish rejection.

3.1.5 Message of St Luke

There is no one line message in Luke's gospel because several theological themes are highlighted in the gospel and of course many of them overlap. However, these summaries the message of Luke:

1. The Gospel is known for its teaching on "universalism" - a breaking-down of all legal privileges and class distinctions, a free admission of all sinners alike to the mercy of God upon their repentance.
2. This universality of Christ's promises are more distinctly marked; the invitations to the careless, to the wanderer, to the forsaken of man of this world are more marked, more definite, more urgent. The doctrines of the four Gospels are the same; only in Luke this special feature of Jesus' teaching is more accentuated.
3. This Gospel certainly dwells with peculiar emphasis on the infinite love and compassion of Jesus, which induced him, in his endless pity, to seek and to save, souls among all sorts and conditions of men.
4. There is also a special compensation for poverty. In most cases it sees as if Luke favours that the faithful poor stood often fairer for the kingdom of God than his seemingly more fortunate, wealthier brother. But we see very clearly from Luke's teaching that it is never poverty which saves, or wealth which condemns. It was the righteous use of recourses which won the Lord's smile of approval.

Above all, the key message of the Gospel of Luke is, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He presents Jesus Christ as the

compassionate Son of man, who came to live among sinners, love them, help them, and die for them.

3.1.6 The Structure and Content

The words of Magnificat (Luke 1.46-55) summaries the major theme of the Gospel and from beginning to the end he presents his Gospel in such a way that favours the poor and so-called sinners (Luke 19.7), social outcasts, and other unpopular people featured in Luke as the objects of Jesus' concern (Secombe, 1983). Another significant event occurs at the beginning of Jesus' ministry that emphasises the above theological fact is his preaching in the Nazareth synagogue (Luke 4.18-19). This contains a programmatic statement about Jesus' anointing by the Spirit to preach good news to the poor. Its concern for the poor contributes to the theological importance of the Gospel.

The following is peculiar to the gospel of Luke: a. Five songs or poems are recorded by Luke only: i. the Ave Maria (1.28), ii. The *Magnificat* (1.46-56), iii. The *Benedictus* (1.68-79), iv. Gloria in *Excelsis* (2.14), v. The *Nunc Dimitis* (2.29-32). The situations in which the songs were rendered and the content of the songs point that Jesus was born in a poor background. This emphasizes from onset suggest that socio-economic salvation among other themes is the major concern of the Gospel. b. Christ is presented as the son of man (Luke 19:10). This refers to the universality of the Gospels. c. the minorities have a special place in the gospel of Luke (1.53, 2.8-20, 2.24, 5.30), d. Several people appear only in Luke, including: Zacharias, and Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, Zachaeus and Cleopas, e. it is only Luke who preserves the parables of the good Samaritan (10:30-37) the rich fool (12.16-21) the rich man and Lazarus (16.19-31), the Pharisee and the publican (18.9-14) and the classic parable of the lost sheep, the lost silver, and the lost son in chapter 15. All these centre on his concern for the poor and show a special interest in medicine and disease.

3.1.7. Lucan Community

The prologues to Luke and Acts both mentioned that the recipient is Theophilus (Luke 1.1-4, Acts 1.1). As said earlier that part of the purpose of the book was to confirm Theophilus in the things he has been taught. It is assumed that Luke knew his gospel would be circulated more widely than just Theophilus. Based on the emphases in Luke, concerning Gentiles, it is further assumed that the wider audience was primarily Gentiles but would include secondarily, the Jews.

The recipients otherwise the composition of the Lucan community is unknown. The characteristics of the Lucan community have been much discussed among scholars. Some say that the Lucan community is mostly composed of the poor. Kingsbury (1969) for example claims that the Lucan community was poor on the ground that his writings favour the poor. He further suggests that Luke used the monetary units that were consistent with life in his community. That is to say that Luke is trying to protect the interest of the poor.

On the other hands, some scholars claim that the Lucan community had more rich people than poor. They feel that Luke's socio-economic gospel is aimed more toward the rich and reputed. This school is supported with the following fact: Luke 8.3 tells us that rich women of high standing were the economic supporters of Jesus' movement. The Lucan community included people who deserved high seats at tables (14.10). Also, the first guests to be invited in the parable of the great dinner were the rich (14.15-24). The parable of the rich fool (12.16-21), the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16.19-31), and the story of Zacchaeus (19.1-10) all feature rich people.

Since there is much devotion to the rich and poor in Luke's gospel, it is therefore possible that the Lucan community was composed of both rich and poor. The economic gap among the above groups in Lucan community gave rise to socio-economic conflicts and Luke appears to have striven to settle the conflicts. His solution is consolation for the poor (6.20-23) and criticism for the rich (6.24-26)-criticism that urged repentance. This repentance reveals itself when one shares his riches; when one does not lead a life of sharing, an eschatological warning is given. Luke's concern and effort about this may be seen throughout his Gospel. But of special importance is the introductory part of Luke's Gospel where events before Jesus' public ministry are told, as it provides essential clues about Luke's interests.

3.2 Construction of Social World of Lucan Greco-Roman World

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31), cannot be studied in isolation from Luke's deep interest of the Mediterranean society, which forms the framework of the Gospel of Luke. It is argued that the Roman Empire had a major influence on the characters and writers of the New Testament books. In the Gospel of Luke in particular, there are some obvious references to the Roman Empire and its interaction with Jesus. Hence, Jesus' world as viewed by Luke is set vividly in the context of the Roman world (Stambaugh and Balch, 1986). The understanding of this background will help the reader of the Gospel of Luke to assimilate the content therein. Jesus challenged and redefined the cultural institutions of his time, so that those who were previously on the inside were now on the outside and those whose religious, economic, political status placed them on the peripheries were invited to become the people of God. For more details, we shall look into the Greco-Roman world of Luke's Gospel under the following headings: socio- political, socio-economic and socio-religious frameworks. This will form a backdrop on which our understanding of the parable will be constructed.

3.2.1 Socio-Political Background

The historical and geographical components of the first three chapters of Luke presume that the author and audience as Dar (1998) sums it “were familiar with Roman political system, including typical patterns of Roman interaction with native populations of subjected territories” (p.100). It is clearly said by Dar (1998), that “the dramatic opening phrase ‘in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberias Caesar’ is beyond a chronological reference point, but signals that a new and important phrase of the story is beginning” (p.102). The six-fold synchronic listing of other rulers and realms, and Emperor Augustus’ census in Chapter 2, recognise the existence of the Roman government. However, some New Testament scholars are of the opinion that Augustus’ census should not be taken historically to determine the time and socio-political world of Luke. For example Fitzmyer (1990) pointed out that:

It is clear that the census is purely a literary device used by him to associate Mary and Joseph, residents of Nazareth, with Bethlehem, the town of David, because he knows of a tradition, also attested in Matthew chapter 2 that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He is also aware of a tradition about the birth of Jesus in the days of Herod, as in Matthew; Luke’s form of the tradition, unlike Matthew’s, tied the birth in a vague way to a time of political disturbance associated with a census (p.393).

Walton (2002) in likely manner is very optimistic that Luke presents a non-violent relationship with the Roman government, offering an apologetic designed to persuade Roman officials that Christianity is politically harmless, or that Christian faith and the dominant Roman Empire could co-exist satisfactorily.

In contrast, Dar (1981) presumes that Luke’s story of Jesus and Herod the Tetrarch are depicted as antagonistic representatives of charismatic and institutional authority that is the charismatic versus rulers, charismatic whose aim and objective is social transformation at the expense of the

institutional authority and institutional authority stick to maintain the social order. Dar and Weber (1981) are in support of Dar's view of hostile relationship between Jesus and the Roman Government pointed out that it is always truism that charismatic intend to arise and develop often during the times of great, physical, economic, ethical, religious and political distress, that is, when the institutional structures seem to be failing to meet the needs of a society. Jesus came at a time like this to bring social, religious, economic and political freedom to those oppressed by the established systems.

The 'protagonists', John and Jesus, were identified as charismatic, non- participants of the hierarchical power structures of Galilee and Judea. Jesus especially is portrayed as the son of simple, pious, humble peasants, despite their claim to Davidic ancestry. From the analysis, it is the political status that determines whether one is in upper class or lower class and also determines the economic status. John and Jesus were not in upper class and by every indication were termed charismatic who came to turn the system upside down. It is therefore important to survey briefly the political system which was in existence during the time of Jesus.

3.2.2 Luke's Social Background and the Roman Colonial Government

It is agreed among the New Testament scholars that Rome took over the ancient world by force through the exploits and success of General Pompey in 63Bc (Okwesisli & Ewelukwa, 2008). The Romans did not normally send their legions to physically occupy conquered lands, ruling instead through efficient laws, economic pressure and military bases strategically positioned as "deterrent forces" around the periphery of the empire (Horsley & Richard, 2003). Roman Empire had her headquarters in Rome. The head of the colonial government was the emperor titled Caesar. McCain (1996) has this to say, "Rome began to

become influential in the fifth century BC and it slowly gained prominence until it was a major world power by 63BC.” (p. 49).

Normally Rome was a republican but absolute monarchy in practice, the emperor was expected to act according to the will of the senate and the people, but in practice the Roman emperor had absolute powers; paid little or no attention to the will of the senate and the people. The senate was a legislative body; it was composed of hundreds of national leaders who achieved their positions by their wealth or property, some were elected by the people by popular vote while few were elected by the senate itself. The Roman Empire with her headquarters in the Rome had the Emperor at the centre of authority.

Roman Empire was divided into provinces to ensure law, order and good governance. There were two types of Roman provinces. The provinces that were directly under the emperor were imperial provinces. The emperor appointed the procurator or the governors or proprietors. These procurators and proprietors, appointed by the emperor himself were responsible to him directly. The procurators were appointed by emperor for small provinces while the proprietors were appointed for larger provinces. In the Roman province of Judea, procurators like Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus were appointed at various points in time (Luke. 3:1-2). The Roman Emperor appointed proprietors for larger Roman provinces like Cilicia, Syria, Galatia and Pamphylia.

The senate appointed pro-consuls to be in charge of the senatorial provinces. The pro-consuls were directly responsible to the senate. The procurators, proprietors, and pro-consuls were all high Roman officials appointed from Rome to govern the Roman provinces. They maintained law and order in the provinces under jurisdictions. They collected taxes from the subjects.

They kept the provinces under the subjection of their own. They administered justice wherever Roman law was concerned.

The Roman Empire was kept in order under very high military precedence. The imperial guard protected the emperor, his palace and the city of Rome. The Roman legion, as the imperial guard was made up of Roman citizens. In order to make the empire work effectively and sustain these sophisticated Governmental systems, taxes were collected from Roman subjects. Taxes were collected on import and excise duties at big sea and river ports. Like Decapolis by Sea of Galilee, Troas and Philippi in Macedonia. Individual taxes like property taxes and bachelor taxes were imposed and collected for the maintenance of the army, the Roman provincial authorities and the imperial government including the senate. Consequently, Palestine in the time of Jesus was always volatile region. Throughout Jesus' life, Jews faced routine harassment, violence and humiliation by these Roman soldiers, including forced conscription as baggage porters.

3.2.3 The Socio-Economic World.

Though the issue of politics and power contributed significantly to the social strata in the Lucan world of Jesus, it is generally acknowledged that economic factor also plays some roles in defining the social polarization of the Greco-Roman world. It can be characterized as a period of extreme inequality in terms of its socio-economic conditions, (Elser, 1996). Schmidt (1987) puts it thus, "there was widespread oppression of the overpopulated mass of the lower classes, high taxation, natural disasters, and societal polarization aggravated the situation" (p.19). Taxation constitutes much of the agony of the Jewish people. For the details of the effect of taxation, both the civic and temple, to economic crisis and decline, Schmidt (1987) has this to say, "The total taxation of the Jewish people in the time of Jesus,

civil and religious combined, must have approximated the intolerable proportion of between 30 and 40 per cent” (p. 20-25).

The problem is not simply that very few percentage of the populace are has more than enough and while others are hungry and naked and homeless; the depth and reality of the problem is that those who were rich had power over those who were poor. But more importantly the socio-economic system supports and constantly increases them, so that the rich get deliberately richer while the relatively poor get poorer and have less control of their future. Stambaugh and Balch (1986) put it thus:

in terms of power, influence, money, and the perceptions of the time, we can divide the population of the Roman world into two main categories, those with influence and those without it, the honourable and the humble, those who govern and those who were governed, those who had property and those who did not, the upper category was very small, the lower, very large (p. 110).

Such society was marked with exploitation of the poor, and ostentation, the conspicuous or vulgar display of wealth and success, especially designed to impress people. Kim (1998), on his part describes it thus, the “Greco-Roman world is to be considered as one which was designed particularly for the elite group of the society, while the rest of the society just existed for helping those privileged to enjoy their lives conveniently” (p. 255). Other contributing factors to poverty in Greco-Roman ancient times, apart from unbalanced social structure which contribute to socio-economic stress, as Schmidt (1987) had mentioned, were natural phenomena, the frequent famine, and droughts.

In such a socio-economically tough society, unless the wealthy took action to help the poor survive; they might on a daily basis face starvation and even death. Though there were some benefaction programmes both in the government and private sectors, this occurred on an irregular basis, not from philanthropy or civic spirit, but from the interest of the wealthy for reward. Benefactions made by the wealthy were not out of willingness or self-sacrifice or from Jewish law of charity or almsgiving, but from selfish interest: the wealthy benefactors in return expected to be given honours. This seems in love for public recognition, which was expressed in forms of titles, inscriptions, statutes and other privileges. Benefactors also expected repayment of loan as debt thereby subjecting multitude of people as debtors.

Though the merchants and artisans have some degree of wealth, and to some extent control of financial markets, there was still dichotomy between them and the aristocrats. The aristocrats treat them as poor on the ground of having deficiency in political power. Esler (1996) sums it thus “They totally isolated themselves from political power, and were not allowed to entertain themselves in a social atmosphere like the nobility” (p. 272). Initially as comradeship, those who engaged in the same professions began to gather in certain places in order to have social events, for entertainment and for burials (Kim, 1998 and Esler, 1996). So the have-nots in the Greco-Roman world suffered discrimination and unfair dichotomous treatment from the hands of both the political juggernauts and the affluent merchants.

The demand for tribute to Rome and taxes to Herod in addition to the tithes and offerings to the Temple and priesthood dramatically escalated the economic pressures on peasant producers, whose livelihood was perennially marginal at best. After decades of multiple demands from multiple layers of rulers many village families fell increasingly into debt and were faced with loss of their family inheritance of land. The impoverishment of families led to the

disintegration of village communities and the fundamental social form of such an agrarian society. These are precisely the deteriorating conditions that Jesus addressed in the Gospel of Luke: impoverishment, hunger, and debt (Crossan, 2008).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.10-31) evokes a realistic portrait of this socio-economic world in the time of Jesus and Luke. Luke begins by giving brief descriptions of social backgrounds of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man he describes as “was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day and at the gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores” (Luke 16.19-20). Hock (1987) asserts that Lazarus’ condition represents the poor populace subjected under extreme environmental stress, hunger and untreatable diseases (Snodgrass, 2008). Hultgren (2000) stresses that this life is made manifest in kind of attire they put on which is usually made of purple which depicts the royal colour and gate also signifies wealthy house or mansion. The combination of fine linen and purple clothing depicts the luxurious living of the rich in the ancient world and in particular the rich man in the parable. It is particularly fitting for royalty and those proud of their wealth. Old and New Testament and inter-testament books support that purple was rare and expensive because of the difficult process of obtaining the best dye from marine snails (Sir. 40.4, 1Macc. 8.4, 10.20, 62, 64; 11.58; Esdr. 3.6; Mark 15.17, John 19.2, Judg. 8.26, Esth.8.15, Prov. 31.22, Dan.5.7, Acts. 16.14. Rev 19.7, 14). The fact that there is a ‘gate’ at which Lazarus lay means that the rich man lives in a mansion surrounded by a wall designed to keep the ‘have-nots’ at a distance and outside the centre of merriment. These divergent socio-economic backgrounds of the rich man and Lazarus are a typical picture of the wealth-centred Greco-Roman world of Luke’s gospel. The world of two extremes: a very few elites on the top and the majority of poor population with dehumanizing conditions on the bottom. Hultgren (2000) sums it thus:

In terms of power, influence, money, and the perceptions of the time, we can divide the population of the Roman world into two main categories, those with influence and those without it, the honourable and the humble, those who govern and those who were governed, those who had property and those who did not, the upper category was very small, the lower, very large (p. 112).

The survey of the socio-economic background of Luke reviews that Luke portrays a picture of Greco-Roman world as that of unjust dichotomy of very few rich and a large population of poor who live little above hungry line, together with its gross exploitation and injustice. Luke also pictures Jesus as social reformer whose mission is to fight against this socio-economic disorder. With this in mind, one can understand why the materials on poor and possession run like thread in the gospel of Luke.

The socio-economic background of Luke can be summed up as follows:

1. A world of very few wealthy elites who have great wealth and whose wealth gives them great power, but the majority of the population suffer from degrees of abject poverty and marginalization.
2. A world characterized as a period of extreme inequality in terms of its socio-economic conditions.
3. A world where the over-populated low class was subjected to frequent exploitation through high taxation by the few elites.
4. A world whose socio-economic system supports the broad inequality between the rich and the poor so that the rich get deliberately richer while the relatively poor get poorer and have no control of environment.

5. A world where the rich display their wealth always through feasting, eating, drinking and clothing.
6. A world where the elites and the poor live in ghettos with little or no traffic between them.

3.2.4 The Socio-Religious Background

In the religious circle, social distance was not different from what was obtained in socio-political and socio-economic circles. The poor were not only economically deprived but included as Green (1997) puts it among “those who are for any number of socio-religious reasons relegated to positions outside the boundaries of God’s people” (p. 211). The centrality of the Jerusalem temple which ought to be a leveller and point of *koinonia* and fraternity among the faithful and pious turned to be status markers. The Jerusalem Temple was a significant element in religious, social and political setting of Jesus time. According to Luke, The Jerusalem Temple dominates Jesus’ life and ministry from the beginning to the end. Temple was considered as a dwelling place of God among humankind. Jesus affirmed this by his saying that the Temple should be a house of prayer, not of thieves; this is a strong affirmation of sanctity connected with God’s presence on the one hand and caution against misuse of the temple. The connection of Temple with thieves depicts that the temple has been taken over by the men on top who exploit majority of innocent worshippers in the name of religious rite. The Temple was a place of sacrifice later it was taken over by authorities that made the Temple the Merchandize and Jesus directed against them and their customers. The action of Jesus has been disputed since this infrastructure of service is essential for service for pilgrims and other worshippers. Temple is central in religious activities of the Jews in the time of Jesus. As an occupied land, Jews were subject to a complex system of religious and secular taxation, the extent and burden is difficult to determine. Any male Jew which is over twenty years of age was therefore subject to the Temple tax. Initially it was voluntary but by the time

of Jesus, the payment of Temple tax had being a compulsory making the socio-religious life of the Jews cumbersome. The incidents acting around the temple indicates the demand not only for social reformation but also in the religious circle.

For Luke, says Green (1997), “the power of the temple as a cultural-defining institution is demarcated especially in social and religious terms and politico-economic” (p.61). The insiders like the Pharisees and the scribes in the socio-religious circle, displayed greed, pride, a desire for honour and status, and a general lack of compassion on the same scale with those of aristocracy and the nobles. The temple, which was the locus of God’s presence, and a place of prayer, in contrast has become an institution that served as, and perpetuated distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, High Priests and other priests; priests and non-priests, men and women, Levites and non-Levites, the rich and the poor. Green (1997), is of the opinion that Luke did not elaborate on the politico-economic power of the temple, because for him the primary importance of the temple rests upon the socio-religious and socio-political.

Though Green (1997) is optimistic that Luke was much concerned about the socio-religious and socio-political foci of the Temple, Cassidy argues that, “the main socio-economic abuse of what Jesus responds to in Luke occurred at the Jerusalem Temple as, ‘He entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them,’ it is written, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers 19:45-46” (p. 35).

3.3 Nigerian Socio-Economic System

Nigeria has one of the world’s highest economic growth rates, averaging 7.4% according to the Nigeria economic report released in July 2014 by the World Bank. Poverty however, still remains 33.1% in the Africa’s biggest economy called Nigeria. For a country with massive

wealth and a huge population to support commerce, a well-developed economy and plenty of natural resources such as oil, the level of poverty remains unacceptable. However, poverty may have been overestimated due to the lack of information on the extremely huge informal sector of the economy estimated at around 60% more of the current GDP figures.

Poverty in Nigeria can also be caused by the political instability of the country. However, these programs have largely failed to overcome the three reasons for this persistent poverty: Income inequality, ethnic conflict and political instability. For the income inequality; as at 2010, the Gini coefficient of Nigeria is rated medium, at 0.43 (Uchendu, 2010). However, there are more rural poor than urban poor. This correlated with differential access to infrastructure and amenities. This results from the composition of Nigeria's economy, especially the energy (oil) and agricultural sectors. Oil exports contribute significantly to government revenues; it contributes 9% to the GDP and employs only a fraction of the population. Agriculture however, contributes to about 17% of GDP and employs about 30% of the population.

This incongruence is compounded by the fact that oil revenue is poorly distributed among the population, with higher government spending in urban areas than rurally. High unemployment rates render personal incomes even more divergent. However, the process of oil extraction has resulted in significant pollution which further harms the agricultural sector.

For the long term ethnic conflict and civil unrest Nigeria has historically experienced much ethnic conflict. With the return to civilian rule in 1999, militants from religious and ethnic groups have become markedly more violent. While this unrest has its roots in poverty and economic competition, its economic and human damages further escalates the problems of poverty (such as increasing the mortality rate). For instance, ethnic unrest and the displeasure

to local communities with oil companies have contributed to the conflict over oil trade in the Niger Delta which threatens the productivity of oil trade. Civil unrest might also have contributed to the adoption of the populist policy measures which work in the short run, but impede poverty alleviation efforts.

On the political instability and corruption, Nigeria's large population and historic ethnic instability has led to the adoption of a federal government. The resultant fiscal decentralization provides Nigeria's state and local government's considerable autonomy, including control over 50% of government revenues, as well as responsibility for providing public services. The lack of stringent regulatory and monitoring system has allowed for rampant corruption. This has hindered past poverty alleviation efforts to a large extent, since resources which could pay for public goods or directed towards investment (and so create employment and other opportunities for citizens) are misappropriated.

There have been attempts at poverty alleviation, most notably with the following programs: 1972 National Accelerated Food Production Programme and the Nigerian Agricultural and Cooperative Bank. In 1976 an operation feed the nation emerged to teach the rural farmers how to use modern farming tools. In 1979 Green Revolution Programme was introduced to reduce food importation and increase local food production. Again in 1986, the Directorate of Food Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) was introduced. In 1993, the Family Support Programme and Family Economic Advancement Programme was introduced also. In 2001, the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) came into being to replace the previously failed poverty alleviation programme (Labour Force Statistics, 2010).

In spite of all these landmark achievements, Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world. The World Poverty Clock (2010) has reported that Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the most extreme poor people in the world. India has a population seven times larger than Nigeria's. The struggle to lift more citizens out of extreme poverty is an indictment on successive Nigerian governments which have mismanaged country's vast oil riches through incompetence and corruption. The 86.9million Nigerians now living in extreme poverty represents nearly 50% of its estimated 180million population (Labour Force Statistics, 2010).

As Nigeria faces a major population boom, it will become the world's third largest country by 2050 and the problem will likely worsen if nothing is done about the rising rate of poverty in the country. The National Bureau of Statistics said 60% of Nigerians in 2010 were living in absolute poverty and this figure had risen from 54.7% in 2014. The bureau predicted that this rising trend was likely to continue. According to the report, absolute poverty is measured by the number of people who can afford only the bare essentials of shelter, food and clothing.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), a government agency said that there was a paradox at the heart of Nigeria as the economy was going from strength to strength, mainly because of oil production, yet Nigerians were getting poorer. Despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year, although it declined between 1985 and 1992 and between 1996 and 2004, oil accounts for some 80% of Nigeria's state revenues has hardly any capacity to refine crude oil into fuel, which has to be imported (NBS bureau, 2004). Most times, when the government tried to remove the subsidy on fuel, it angers most Nigerians that they see it as the only benefit they received from the country's vast oil wealth.

The NBS in (2004) said that the relative poverty was most apparent in the north of the country, with Sokoto States poverty rate the highest at 86.4%. In the North West and North East of the country, poverty rates were recorded at 77.7% and 76.3% respectively, compared to the South West at 59%. BBC Africa analyst, Hamilton in (2005) said that it is perhaps no surprise that extremist groups, such as Boko Haram, continue to have an appeal in northern parts of the country, where poverty and underdevelopment are at their most severe. The report also revealed that Nigerians consider themselves to be getting poorer, and making these data available is to help the government know what is really happening so they can track their policies and programmes.

It is however saddened that despite its vast resources, Nigeria ranks among the most unequal countries in the world. According to UN report (2014), the poverty in the north is in stark contrast to the more developed southern states. While in the oil rich south east, the residents of Delta and Akwa Ibom complain that all the wealth they generate flows up the pipeline to Abuja and Lagos. The residents of these cities tend to have better access to healthcare, as reflected by the greater uptake of vaccines for polio, tuberculosis, tetanus and diphtheria. In Nigeria also, there is a stark contrast between the mainly Muslim north and the Christian and animist south. In some northern states, less than 5% of women can read and write, whereas in some Igbo areas more than 90% are literate (Uchendu, 2010).

Again, Nigeria as the biggest oil producer in Africa and among the biggest in the world but most of its people are starkly poor. The oil is produced in the South-east and South-south and some militant groups there want to keep a greater share of the wealth which comes from under their feet. Attacks by militants on oil installations led to a sharp fall in Nigeria's output during the last decade.

The poverty rate in Nigeria has so degenerated that according to UNICEF (2014) report stated that majorly of household in Nigeria drink contaminated water to the tune of 90.8%. Some of this contaminated water has faces and other substances in them thereby exposing the people to health risks. The country's population notwithstanding is also another reason for extreme poverty that ravage the people. With the lack of family planning and an influx of refugees possibly from Cameroon has also worsened the poverty situation in the country.

The Labour Force statistics (2010) further reveals the poverty level in all the 36 states of the country and its federal capital. The statistics goes as follows: Lagos – 8.5%, Osun state- 10.5%, Anambra- 11.2%, Ekiti – 12.9%, Edo- 19.2%, Imo 19.8%, Abia- 21.0%, Rivers- 21.1%, FCT Abuja- 23.5%, Kwara- 23.7%, Akwa Ibom-23.8%, Delta-25.1%, Ogun-26.1%, Kogi- 26.1%, Ondo-27.9%, Enugu-28.8%, Bayelsa- 29.0%, Oyo- 29.4%, Cross River- 33.1%, Plateau- 51.6%, Nasarawa- 52.4%, Ebonyi-56.0%, Kaduna- 56.5%, Adamawa- 59.0%, Benue 59.2%, Niger- 61.2%, Borno- 70.1%, Kano- 76.4%, Gombe-76.9%, Taraba- 77.7%, Kastina- 82.2%, Sokoto- 85.3%, Bauchi- 86.6%, Jigawa- 88.4%, Yobe- 90,2%, Zamfara- 91.9%

Following the statistics above, one would wonder what would be the best solution for the country to wriggle out of these economic quagmires. One of the best solutions is advancing growth which would lead to more sustainable poverty reduction. Another solution is through self-employment, entrepreneurship as well as digital transformation of the nation's economy. Furthermore, the World Bank have given a pair of ambitions goals to end extreme poverty by 2030 and promote shared prosperity by boosting the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population in each state of the country. The 2018 report concludes that financial inclusion helps fight poverty because it reduces income and consumption volatility. This in turn, allows people

to make better decisions that ultimately help shift their income curves up. It is this shifting of the curve where there is need to focus efforts. It is a catalyst that helps ensure that people access a more sustainable livelihood. There is also a need for private/public partnerships which will also help to reduce the poverty rate.

Poverty is one of the major challenges facing Nigeria past and present, social interaction between the rich and the poor is even more. Nigeria is a nation of a widening gulf between very few wealthy and numerous citizens living far below poverty level. The rich people in Nigeria context are prototypes of the rich man in Luke 16:19-31 and they are comprises of the following as enumerated by Ottuh (2014):

1. Those who own big companies but pay workers peanuts as salaries.
2. Those who are in the seat of political and economic powers but do not care about how the resources of the nation can be used in such a way that the poor can benefit.
3. Those who increase school fees indiscriminately thereby depriving the poor from attaining education.
4. Those who monopolize all businesses living no room for the poor to gain access to any meaningful business to better their lots.
5. Those who hijacked all enabling environment for business and academic leaving the poor at the periphery.

The poor in Nigeria context as consist of the following:

1. School drop outs due to incessant increment of school fees in government Universities which their parents or sponsors could not afford.
2. The unemployed who roam the street with his degree certificate.

3. The under-paid employee who generates huge amount of money for his employer yet under-paid.
4. The orphans, widows and widowers whose' benefactors left some resources for but such resources have been taken away from them by the highly placed in the family but cannot afford justice.
5. The retrenched and out of job persons who go hungry without any hope of one meal a day.
6. The lowly placed person who does not have any godfather at the top and thereby having no hope of gaining any access to resources that can better his lot.
7. The sick and physically challenged who struggle for survival through begging for alms.
8. The brilliant child of the poor parents whose child cannot gain access to scholarship to fulfil his academic and professional dreams.
9. The child who has become a street and high way vendor of commodities due to lack of free education.

The problem is not that few Nigerians are rich and numerous Nigerians poor, but the rich control the affairs or the destinies of the poor populace with little or no interest in the betterment of the poor and their social systems. These categories of poor people are not really lazy, they are trying to work hard to make ends meet yet they get it very difficult to get out of poverty due to lack of enabling environment. Many of such people suffer in the hand of the rich.

The parable should be a challenge every rich Christian must not neglect in Nigeria. They should not be selfish with our wealth but must learn to care for those who are poor in the family, church and the society at large.

3.3.1 Poverty and Its Challenges in Nigeria

Poverty remains significant as one of the major challenges in Nigeria. As the one of the world's highest economic growth rate, Nigeria still remains one of the world's poorest nation (Nigeria Economic Report 2014). For a country with massive wealth and a huge population to support commerce, a well-developed economy, and plenty of natural resources such as oil, the level of poverty remains unacceptable.

Nigeria is known for having one of the more affluent economies in Africa; a large oil drilling industry ensures that the country has a consistent revenue stream. But the lives of people in Nigeria reflect poverty rather than affluence. Nweke (2006) maintains that an estimated 67percent of the population, that is one hundred and twenty four million, six hundred and twenty thousand (124,620,000) people live without sufficient means to support themselves and their families. Again, Nigeria has a current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) worth of 405.10 billion dollars, and represents more than half of a percent of the world economy, yet majority of its citizens are poor (Harris, 2014). Yemi (2016) reports that in addition to the Nigeria economy being on the rise, the figure for citizens living in absolute poverty has also risen from 12.3% from 54.7%in 2004. Despite the fact that the Nigerian economy is growing, the proportion of Nigerians living in poverty is increasing every year.

Nigeria's Bureau of public service reform urged attention to a housing shortage in the country that left over one hundred and eight (108) million Nigerians homeless in 2006; yet there are one hundred (100,000) houses built yearly in the country, but with hundreds of million homeless and living in poverty, this is insufficient to support the nation's needs. While facts about poverty in Nigeria illustrate how the country makes most of its money from its oil sector,

the nation has unfortunately become overly dependent on this single industry. Due to this reliance, other areas of the economy that host a majority of available jobs in agriculture, palm oil production and coconut processing are in decline.

Nigerians have one of the fastest growing populations in the world and this has overburdened the government in adequately taking care of its teeming populace. This is most apparent in the north of the country with an estimated poverty rate near 86% (Kale, 2018). As a matter of fact, this study identified three main causes of poverty in Nigeria to include the following:

- a. Income inequality
- b. Ethnic conflict
- c. Political inequality.

3.3.2 Nigerian Social Income Inequality

As at 2010, the Ginny coefficient of Nigeria is rated medium, at 0.43. However, there are more rural poor than urban poor. This is correlated with differential access to infrastructure and amenities (Kale, 2018). This results from the composition of Nigeria's economy, especially the energy (oil) and agriculture sectors. Oil exports contribute significantly to government revenues; it contributes 9% to the GDP, and employs only a fraction of the population. Agriculture, however contributes to about 17% of the GDP, and employs about 30% of the population (Kale, 2018). This incongruence is compounded by the fact that oil revenue is poorly distributed among the population, with higher government spending in urban areas than rurally. A high unemployment rate renders personal incomes even more divergent. Moreover, the process of oil extraction has resulted in significant population, which further harms the agricultural sector.

3.3.3 Long Term Ethnic Conflict and Civil Unrest

Nigeria has historically experienced much ethnic conflict. With the return to civilian rule in 1999, militants from religious and ethnic groups have become markedly more violent while this unrest has its roots in poverty and economic competition; its economic and human damages further escalate the problems of poverty such as increasing the mortality rate. For instance, ethnic unrest and the displeasure to local communities with oil companies has contributed to the conflict over oil trade in the Niger Delta, which threatens the productivity of oil trade. Civil unrest has also contributed to the adoption of populist policy measures which work in the short-run, but impede poverty alleviation efforts.

3.3.4 Political Instability and Corruption

Nigeria's large population and historic ethnic instability has led to the adoption of a federal government. The resultant fiscal decentralisation provides Nigeria's state and local government considerable autonomy, including control over 50% of government revenues, as well as responsibility for providing public services.

The lack of a stringent regulatory and monitoring system has allowed for rampant corruption. This has hindered past poverty alleviation efforts to a large extent, since resources which could pay for public goods or directed towards investment and (so create employment and other opportunities for citizens) are being misappropriated. Nigerian corruption and poverty are interrelated and encourages each other when looking at the human development, Nigeria is at the bottom of the scale and corruption scores highest. Its existence is in all levels in the government-local, state and even at the national departments.

As a result of extreme corruption, even the poverty reduction programs suffer from no funding and have failed to give the needed remedy to this country. One of the reasons for the continued success of corruption is the encouragement that it receives from the government. Government shows tolerance towards corruption and corrupted officials to the extent that the officials facing indictment are pardoned and accepted into the society. Is there a remedy to eradicate corruption? The answer lies in the hands of Nigeria's federal government. They must get involved more and implant stronger reduction programs and ensure that it is being followed by all the officials and departments. Just by eradicating corruption, the country would come off poverty. Taking care of the corruption is taking care of poverty.

3.3.5 Social Inequality between the Poor and the Rich in Nigeria

The index on social wellbeing of the poor and rich in Nigeria is considered very low as regards to the poor citizens of the country. Yemi (2016), reports that there is an unenviable distinction of being and social status between the poor and the rich class of Nigerian citizens. This disparity is found mostly on the health, education and social protection which are scarcely available to the poor citizens of the country. Yemi insists that government's spending on health, education, and social protection is woefully low to take care of overwhelming population of the country. There are cases babies dying from preventable diseases due to inadequate health care facilities or lack of money to secure a better health care from private hospitals. It is observed that most of the government hospitals are poorly funded mainly in rural places.

The consequences of the above funding affect the economic growth of the country adversely. For example is when the disadvantaged low class citizens are denied some basic amenities of

life, the mortality rate will be high thereby reducing the work force that would have contributed to the overall progress of the nation.

Again, the fact that Nigeria is the sixth richest oil producer in the world is a good and at the same times a bad news to majority of Nigerians. It is good because it sends out a positive image of the country to the outside world to a point that its citizens are globally viewed and unknowingly rated as moderately rich especially now that the richest and world 304th richest man in the person of Alhaji Aliko Dangote is a Nigerian. The bad side of the news therefore is that the real position of Nigerians economic status notwithstanding the oil boom is nothing to write home about. Treading the line of history, Nigerians were economically better off before the discovery of oil. The people were more vibrant, hardworking, self-reliant and productive. Things, however, began to change with the discovery of oil and the subsequent advent of its wealth. Government then turned its direction towards the newly discovered national gifts while its citizens soft-pedalled in their life endeavours turning their whole attention to oil wealth. This attitude has created disturbing social and economic problem for the country thereby widening the already existing economic gap and social imbalance between the ruling class and the rich on one hand, and the common masses on the other hand.

Now that the country as an entity is getting richer while its larger population is getting poorer in spite of the boost in the daily oil production coupled with its record high prize in the market. All sectors of the country have been badly hit by the government's neglect owing to the fact that members of the ruling class and the rich no longer require the services of such dilapidated institutions because they have a better alternative. The educational sector for instance, are adversely affected by this in that most of the school buildings and other structures are left unrepaired and without the necessary equipment required for their

successful operations. Teachers especially of primary and secondary schools are under paid. Their monthly salary cannot suffice to even cater for their basic needs. Those of them with family burden have to resort to minor and sometimes risk ventures like operating commercial motorcycles (Okada) in their effort to make ends meet. The students on their part hardly attend their classes due to lack of enough teachers. Dire

Similar or even direr problems are obtainable in the health sector. Hospital have become more consulting centres where if the patient is lucky to see the doctor, the doctor prescribes medication for the patient to go elsewhere and look for the drugs to buy at the exorbitant prices because of their unavailability in the government hospitals. No matter how critical the condition of a patient, he had had to join a long queue in order to see the doctor only for an appointment on the date for the start of the treatment despite the expected consequences that the said patient may die before the date. On the other hand, the well-to-do fly out of the country just for a routine of their medical check-ups.

Even the environment has been segregated between classes of Nigerian populace. While the well-to-do live comfortably with full services of water and power supplies. The less privileged dwell in ghetto areas under disgusting unhygienic drinking water or light to illuminate their bed rooms at nights.

Nigeria is said to be worth a whopping sum over sixty billion in foreign reserve. No time in history has the country become so stupendously rich and its people so magnanimously poor. People of other oil producing countries enjoy the benefits accrued from any slight hike in the price of oil at world market, while Nigerians pay dearly for epileptic services of government parastatals. One could recall a time in the past when Kuwaitis were individually given 500

dollar each as a gift by their government due to hike of the oil price in global market, while the Nigerian government was increasing domestic prices of petroleum products for the same reason.

If not for the technological advancement that constrict the world into a global village and so information about any country becomes rapidly available at the click of a button, foreigners living outside the shores of the country would not believe the fact that most Nigerians are living below poverty line. Identifiable factors serving as a hindrance to Nigeria's economic progress include corruption, nepotism, political godfatherism, brutal system of Capitalism and government's insensitivity to the woes of the people.

3.4 A Comparative Analysis of Nigeria and Lucan Worlds

From all that has been gathered, both the Lucan and Nigerian worlds share a lot of things in common as regard to the social inequality between the rich and the poor. The two worlds appear to be seriously under physical, economic, ethical and political stress. The descriptions of Luke's world are as follows:

1. The world having concern for political world and balance of power in Greco-Roman Palestine.
2. World where eschatological anticipation is rampant because of social stress.
3. World of social status and social stratification.
4. World defined around power and privileged and is measured by a complex of phenomena, religious purity, family heritage, landownership, vocation, ethnicity, gender, education and age.

The situation in Nigeria is slightly different from that of the Lucan Greco-Roman Palestinian world. Aside from their differences, their shared ideas hinges on the inequality that exists

between the rich and poor citizens. Their belief on social justice and inequality of status and opportunity based on one's understands that the rich are meant to enjoy a secured maximum welfare; freedom and happiness are the detriment of the poor who are denied these basic rights. Consequently, it was this condition of living that Luke stood to fight. As an apologetic writer, he fought against the unjust dichotomy of the very few rich and a large population of the poor who live little above the hunger line, together with its gross exploitation and social injustices.

The researcher also observes a similar condition in the present day Nigeria and felt that it also needs to be addressed. Like the poor in the Lucan world that includes the sick, beggars, lepers, the outcast, widows and likes of them who live at the mercy of the rich, the socio-political economic and religious background in Nigeria is almost the same. The economic inequality in Nigeria has reached extreme levels, despite being the largest economy in Africa. The country has an expanding economy with abundant human capital and the economic potentials to lift millions out of poverty yet the poor are getting poorer and the rich richer. Until this is addressed, Nigeria can never be a better place to live.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXEGESIS OF THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (Luke 16.19-31)

This chapter deals with the exegetical analysis of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). The scope of this exegetical study is limited to Luke 16.19-31, though some scholars maintain that the whole chapter 16 of the gospel of Saint Luke forms a unit that deals with greed and should not be dissected in sections but to be treated as one unit. The parable under question is central axis of the gospel of Luke. Central because it is a consummation of Luke's advocacy against social injustice and right use of possession as part and parcel of qualities demanded for one to belong to the new Christian community. This forms the central message of Luke's gospel.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) is unique among the entire parables in the New Testament. Its uniqueness is characterized on the grounds of the following:

1. It appears only in Luke's Gospel.
2. It is only in this parable that the characters are assigned names.
3. Only here does a parable from Jesus go beyond everyday reality to focus on the afterlife.

The parable under consideration is a two- stage parable, the pictures of the two men and their fates carefully narrated and in a balance situation. The rich man lives luxuriously and in honour on one side of the gate and Lazarus miserably on the other. A gate that could have been an opening to help Lazarus represents the gulf that exists between the two men after death. At death, in reversal, the rich man is miserable and Lazarus is in a place of comfort and honour. The rich man banqueted every day, after death Lazarus presumably is at the eschatological banquet. Lazarus misery is paralleled by the rich man's misery after reversal.

Both the rich man and Lazarus desire merely a small thing to alleviate pain, Lazarus a crumb and rich man a drop of water and both endure physical pain and torment.

The structure of this work is expository, interpretative, and deductive. It is expository because, efforts are made to point out some textual and linguistics problems posed by the text. The semantic, syntactical and exegetical reading of the text takes care of the interpretative aspect, and deductive gives a grasp of the message of the text.

4.1 Background of the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31)

It appears the best way to approach the study of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) is to discuss the possible traditions and sources behind the parable.

a. Source Criticism

Many scholars have argued that Jesus was not the first person to tell this parable (Jeremias, 1972). Snodgrass (2008) observes that despite Jesus' originality and creativity of the parable, the forms He used were not new. To some degree Christian and Jewish scholars have been guilty of provincialism and cultural imperialism in studying the parables, for often they have ignored or downplayed parables from other contexts. In this section, the researcher does not need to survey the religious and cultural backgrounds pertinent to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus but the sources in which it may be interposed and that include the Old Testament, New Testament, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Early Jewish writings, the Greek-Roman context, the early church, and later Jewish writings:

b. Old Testament

A lot of Old Testament citations are understood as possible sources of the parable. However, many scholars claim that the parable features many obligations as enshrined in the book of Deuteronomy. Nonetheless, this connection is not really clear. The parable of rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) and Deuteronomy 24.6ff consist of injunctions against the oppressive treatment of the poor. While Deuteronomy 24.26ff gives injunctions against the oppression of the poor in Israel, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) speaks of the vindication of the poor from earthly misery. The themes of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus found in Deuteronomy 23: 24 reads “Here again the Israelites is forbidden... to keep back the wages of his needy servant and he is to show generosity to the poor (Deuteronomy 24.17-22).other old testament include Deuteronomy 30.11-13, 1Samuel 28:7-19, Psalm 49:73, Isaiah 58.6-7, Ezekiel 32.21-30, the above hinges on the social interaction. In the Law, God’s people were commanded not to harden their hearts or close their hands against their poor brother or sister, but to be generous in maintaining those who could not maintain themselves, by taking them into their home and feeding them without charge (Deut.15.7ff, Lev. 25.35ff, Deut. 14. 29, Lev. 26.12).

In support of the above, Ottuh (2014) has this to say:

Luke 16:19-31 could be understood from the Old Testament Deuteronomic and Levitical background of the obligation of the rich towards the poor in the Jewish society (Deut.15:4-16; Lev. 25:8-38). The Jews had it as an obligation to care for the poor among them. The rich and highly placed people in the society were instructed to care and protect the right and dignity of the poor among them as could be seen in Isaiah 10:1-4; 58:67. The Church community of Luke was not expected to do less.

Therefore, this story was told to redress the relationship between the poor and the rich in the church community and beyond. (p.64)

However, scholars like Dawson (2017) discards the above and listed the reasons why the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) cannot be connected with Old Testament especially concerning its teaching on the state of the dead:

- a. No such thing as Abraham`s bosom exists in the Old Testament.
- b. No great gulf fixed in the Old Testament, Abraham`s bosoms out of torment.
- c. No endless torment exists in Old Testament.
- d. No conversations among the dead exist in the Old Testament.
- e. No knowledge among the dead exists in Old Testament.
- f. No consciousness among the dead exists in Old Testament.
- g. No praying for Abraham exists in the Old Testament.
- h. No Abraham hearing the prayers of the wicked exists in the Old Testament, as we resume the rich man to be praying to.

Dawson (2017) further emphasizes that the story is not about their character, but their economic standing. It is not about their spiritual conditions nor about their religious status, but about their riches. The wealthy were saddled with the responsibility of caring for the poor in the Jewish Christian society. However, whether the parable originated from the Old Testament or not is a matter but its connexion with the Old Testament cannot be ignored.

c. New Testament

Many studies have been suggested that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) emerges and /or related to other texts from New Testament. The world in which Jesus was born was divided into two major groups of people: the rich and the poor. The greatest

percentage was the poor while the rich comprise a very tiny proportion of the populace. The material in the New Testament on rich and poor is set against this background.

There are some terms used to describe the poor in the New Testament. Among these terms, *πτωχός* is usually used for the poor. This term is most common in the gospels especially the synoptic, *πτωχός* (poor) is completely absent from Hebrews, 1 and 2nd Peter, Jude and Johannine Epistles (Bammel, 1968). The reason for such omission is not actually known.

The materials for poor and rich in Mark (Mark 12.41f; 10.17; 14.5, 7) seem to attack the rich. In Mark Jesus applauds the support of the poor widow and her tiny gifts she puts in the treasury as worth more than the big gifts of the rich (Mark 12.41) and commanded the rich man to distribute all his possessions to the poor (Mark 10.17ff) and the contrasting rebuke of the disciple for having the poor with them (Mark 10.5-7) suggest that though Jesus commends the distribution of possessions to the poor by the rich and the initial passages seem to attack the rich, with the later passage advocate that the theme of the poor is not developed in Mark. That means that the author has not any intention of exalting the poor and show that Mark is not concern about the problem of poverty.

In Matthew Gospel, it is possible Matthew takes two *πτωχός* passages in Mark and adds two others. As in Mark, Matthew encourages the distribution of possessions to the poor and tightened it by adding that giving away of possessions is one of the prerequisite for the call to be disciple. In the sermon on the plain, Matthew displays the full breath of poor, from purely earthly hopes to pure eschatology. At any rate, the emphasis is shifted from the material sphere to the spiritual and hence religious sphere. This shows that Matthew is not greatly interested in the problems of the actual poor, those in economically want.

In Luke Gospel, there are many occasions in which the uses of *πτωχός* are peculiar to Luke: Luke introduced the theme of the rich and the poor in the infancy stories. The preaching of Jesus is thematically used the quotation from Isaiah 61.1 and the task of preaching to the poor is made specific and the first in the mission agenda of Jesus (Luke 4.18). The woe of Luke 6.24 and the danger of worldly prudence in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12. 16-21). While Matthew says blessed are the poor in spirit (Matthew 5.3), Luke maintains that the poor are the real poor. The parables peculiar to Luke are mainly ones in connection with the rich and the poor. Luke included the poor in all the banquet passages. And he uses those passages to refer to the eschatological banquet. This thought for Luke is radicalized in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus where torment is to be the lot of the rich man, whereas felicity will be the lot of Lazarus as the poor. The poor unlike Matthew should be taken literally and strictly. However, some scholars main that the word *πτωχός* is not important to Luke, it does not occur in the redactional material, and it's complete absence in Luke's gospel sequence (Acts of the Apostles) suggests that Luke neither thinks from the stand point of the poor nor really seeks to address them (Bammal, 1968) secondly the demand for partial or total renunciation of prosession he demands is less for the sake of the poor than for the salvation of the owner. However, this does not disprove that the materials for the poor is not dominant in Luke and they favour the reduction and alleviation of the poor and emphasizes the danger of wealth and neglect of the poor.

In John's gospel, the issue of *πτωχός* is not actually from outlook the concern of the writer. Only in Judas Iscariot grumbles at the waste and impure motive in anointing of Jesus (John 12.5-6) are ascribed to John's concern for the poor.

Pauline materials are notably ambivalent about the poor. Paul uses *πτωχός* infrequently. Paul's variation in the use of the word poor is either based on the literary tradition or suggested by the situation. This does not mean that Paul ignored the problem of poverty in his churches. However, it may be that Paul himself does not devote particular attention to the matter of poverty. His eschatological orientation is too strong to allow him seek amelioration of conditions which are in any way tolerable.

James contains a running attack on the rich both inside and outside the community while Revelation is scarcely concerned on the issue of the rich and the poor. It is only in Revelation 13.16 the classes between the poor and the rich are used literally. However, many studies have been suggested that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) emerges and /or related to other texts from New Testament.

d. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

The evidence in the Apocrypha and *Pseudepigrapha* literature is not uniform. There is complete avoidance of *πτωχός* or its social situation on one part of apocalyptic writings and other works are full of complaints about poor and rich. Another group follows the wisdom literature by referring to the literary poor by demanding pity and giving of alms. Tob 4.7, 16; Judith 15.5. Other groups are eschatological in their approach. This view of future which is kindly to the poor is preceded by the neutral depiction of an eschatological stage where the poor will be in conflict with the rich and beggars with princes Jub. 23.19. This yields to a final period when the poor will be set above the rich and beggars with princes, though this will stand as an age of confusion. This preserves tradition that there will be no poor in the land in next world and the rich should be generous to those that are currently poor (Deut. 15.4, 11). In the fourth group, the texts are always short proverbs interwoven into other

works. The poor make violent complaints against the rich Enoch 94.7; 96.4ff; 97.8f. The constitutive antithesis of *πτωχός* and *πλούσιος* is made quite irreconcilable in this group. Other groups see poverty more of inner quality of a man especially when confronted with adversaries.

e. The Greek-Roman Literature/ Extra Biblical Sources

It was Gressmann (1918) who first suggested that this parable was originated from Egyptian folk tale of Osiris, the ruler of *Amente*, the land of the dead. This Egyptian tale of Hugo Gressmann was quoted by Grobel (1964) and it reads thus:

An Egyptian in Amente, the realm of the dead was allowed to return to earth in order to deal with an Ethiopian magician who was proving too powerful for the magicians of Egypt. He was reincarnated as the miraculous child of a childless couple, Setme and his wife called Si-Osiris. When he reached the age of twelve he vanquished the Ethiopian Magician and returned to Armente. But before this there was an occasion when father and son observed two funerals, one of a rich man buried in sumptuous clothing and with much mourning, the other of a poor man buried without ceremony or mourning. The father declared he would rather have the lot of rich man than the pauper, but his son expressed the wish that his father's fate in Amente would be that of the pauper rather than the rich man. In order to justify his wish and demonstrate the reversal of fortunes in the life after, he took his father on a tour of the seven halls of Amente. The account of the first three halls is lost. The fourth and fifth halls the dead were being punished. In the fifth hall was the rich man, with pivot of the door of the hall fixed in his eyes. In the sixth hall were gods and attendants, in the seventh a scene of judgment before Osiris. The pauper was to be seen, elevated to high rank, near Osiris. Si-Osiris explains to his father what they saw, and the fate of the three classes

of the dead: those whose good deeds outnumber their bad deeds (like the Pauper), those whose bad deeds outnumber their good deeds (like the rich man) and those whose good and bad deeds are equal (p. 376).

Though there may be some literary dependence, yet there are sufficient differences in the two stories, the Egyptian tale and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The two main characters do not have a personal relationship in this life; the purposes are different; the conclusions make contrasting points. Taken the above data together, it is unlikely that Egyptian tale forms the decisive background for the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The stories of such abound in various cultures over thousands of years ago that tell of the trips to the realm of the dead, often castigating the rich. 'Stories like the Gilgamesh Epic, the Odyssey and 1 Enoch had broad influence and numerous Greek and Jewish stories tell of the experiences of various heroes and average people who visited the realm of the dead. People like Orpheus, Heracles, Persephone, Pythagoras, Elijah and Isaiah. Therefore it is doubtful to single out only the Egyptian tale (Snodgrass, 2008). Nevertheless, neither Gressmanns' Egyptian forktale of Si-Osiris nor Bultmann's suggestion of a Jewish Legend appear to prove of firm background materials of the parable.

f. Early Jewish Writing

The social structure from the Maccabean age under Judaism was beleaguered by great social tensions. Tensions were so great at this time that sometimes the poor seized the goods of others. After the climax of unrest came more settled conditions. At this time, the interest of the Pharisees in the masses, and their connection with them declined. On the other hand new extremist movements emerged in support found support among the dregs of the people. The distress caused by the two wars created a kind of ethos of poverty. In these we find the ancient glorifying of the poor, with whom the sectaries identified themselves. Another issue is

how to interpret the poor law, hence the social care for the poor became of essence and the recommendation or injunction to receive the poor and orphan. Below are the passages that relate to the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31):

- i. 1 Enoch 22: ... - reports that Enoch was taken to a place with four corners where the souls of the dead await judgment, and righteous separated by a spring of water. Picture of hades in the parable the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.9-31).
- ii. 1 Enoch 10: 3-5-104:6 warns wealthy sinners who are unpunished in life that they will experience evil tribulation, darkness and burning flame in Sheol. The righteousness who has been afflicted in life is told not to focus on their plight but on hope. Picture of the reversal fortune in the parable under consideration.
- iii. Tobit. 4:10 “for almsgiving delivers from death and keep from going into the darkness” Pictures the neglect of the rich to the poor as the message of the parable.

g. The explanation of some key situation

i. ἐνεδύετο (Clothing)

πορφύραν καὶ στολὴν βυσσίνην (purple and fine linen clothing) are of particular theological importance. Numerous texts attest to linen and purple clothing as mark of luxurious living, particularly fitting for royalty and those proud of their wealth (Judges 8:26, Esther 8:15, Proverbs 31:22, Daniel 5:7, Acts 16:14, Revelation 18:12). Purple was rare and expensive because of the difficult process of obtaining the best dye from marine snails (Snodgrass, 2008). However, like the contemporary society, the kind of clothing one puts on determines the class he belongs.

ii. **ἐτάφη και ἀπέθανε (death and burial)**

Burial was extremely important in the ancient world and not being buried was viewed as a sign of curse by God. In our text, burial of the rich man is being mentioned and that of Lazarus is stated in a very careful way, ἀγγέλων εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ (carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom). The narrative did not say that Lazarus was not buried but was carried by the angels. The burial of the dead was regarded as a sacred duty in the culture and religion of the Jewish people. The Old Testament attested the importance of the care for the dead and the burial. Abraham purchased a cave for the burial of his wife Sarah (Gen. 23.4-19); Jacob's body was taken to land of Canaan to be buried in a tomb he had hewn (Gen.50.4-14). Joseph's bones were exhumed and taken to Israel and eventually buried in Canaan (Gen. 50.22-26). David commended the men who buried Saul as showing loyalty to him even at death (2Samuel 2.4-5) and host of the like. The great importance of burial provides suggest that refusal for burial is a great bad omen and a curse. Usually refusal to bury is as a result of sin and divine judgment. Jezebel was not buried but eaten by dogs as a punishment for her acts as the poor Nobath (1Kings 21.23). The book of Tobit reflects Tobit's concern for the poor by sharing his cloth and food and most importantly burring the dead even at his own risk (Tobit 1.18, 2.3-8; 4.3-4; 6.15; 14.10-13). Burial was so important that neither Jew nor Gentile; neither innocent nor guilty will remain unburied. Lazarus' burial is not mentioned, but his reception in Abraham's bosom subverts any thought that he is cursed.

iii. **μεγαλοπρεπῶς (Banquet)**

Meals, especially banquets were among the most important contents for social relations. They were the primary context in which shame and honour were assigned. In the ancient world, meals and food went beyond mere physical nourishment. Like most societies, a variety of rules and boundaries related to eating: what persons ate, how persons ate and with whom

persons ate. Such matters reflect the social status associated with those involved. Though the banquet scene is not explicitly indicated in the parable, yet the first part of the parable is implicitly established in meal setting. This setting is not strange with the gospel of Luke.

Hardly a chapter goes by in Luke without some kind of reference to food, meals, eating and hunger (Karris, 1985). The mention of food or meal often comes from Lucan Jesus himself (Luke 15.11-32; 16. 19-32). At other times, the narrator depicts Jesus at meal Table. Jesus is seen at the Table meals in the following episodes: with ‘Outsiders’ or ‘Sinners’ in Luke 5.27-39, 19.1-10; with the Pharisees Luke 7.36-50; 11.37-54;14.1-24; with his disciples Luke 22.14-38; 24.13-35. Brower (2007) submits that apart from passion meal and post resurrection meal episodes, there are many similarities in those meal incidents: 1. It involves apparently wealthy people, in most cases they are the hosts. 2. It is more than consumption of food; they were eaten in a social context. 3. The meals reflect social boundary maker, in most cases this social boundary is emphasized.

It is these social boundaries that Jesus came to put in its rightful place using the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 116.19-31) as prelude which he consummated in post resurrection meals. Throughout the Lucan account of Jesus’ ministry, meal scenes involving Jesus include him as someone’s guest with some kind of controversy over the guests and companions anchored on social strata, the last supper and Emmaus stand in contrast to the other meals (Karris, 1985). Jesus functions as a host rather than guest and intimacy with the partakers emphasized. These episodes become in Lucan gospel the archetypal example of the motif of table meal which the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) stands to portray. Jesus comes to establish, a kingdom where the rich and poor will partake on the same table, against the existing polarization of Greco-Roman society. Luke portrays through the

banquets the kind of kingdom Jesus comes to establish, a kingdom where the rich and poor will partake on the same table, against the existing polarization of Greco-Roman society.

Through his actions and words of each banquet episode, Jesus redefines the boundaries of his Kingdom. He invites the poor, the lame, the crippled and the blind, those whom their conditions have subjected at the periphery of the Kingdom to eat with the elites. Esler (1996) argues that the banqueting in Luke is complicating on the ground that it was completely unknown to the Hellenistic cities for representatives of the top and from the bottom of social hierarchy to gather in a single association. From each banquet, Jesus expresses his mission of bringing the outsiders inside, and happiness to the poor. In many occasions, he also contrasts between the world's banquet and the heavenly banquet. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus "intends his reader to think of the eschatological banquet." The insider being outside and outsider inside, the rich man in the eschatological banquet is outside while Lazarus is having a place of honour at the table next to 'Abraham'. The parable as it stands represents a typical banquet of the Greco-Roman world. Lazarus at the gate demonstrates this. To Luke, salvation which Jesus brings will break the gulf between the rich and the poor. 'It is this cultural tension that the Christian theology of drinking in one cup and one loaf in the Eucharist come to refute. It is only in church that the rich and poor normally associate together.

4.2 Orientation and Establishing the Form of Luke 16:19-31

The proper exegesis of Luke 16:19-31 calls for an understanding of the logic of the text. We can only understand and follow the logical dynamics and sense of this pericope, if we are able to set out the text as a unit of its own hence the delimitation of the text. Delimitation of the text is therefore, the primary purpose of this section.

4.2.1 Delimitation of the Text

Luke 16 as a whole is clearly a literary unit, though also firmly linked to the previous and subsequent narratives. The chapter is neatly structured as two parables with identical opening lines bracketing Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom and the men living in it. It has a central message and the message hangs on the issue of greed or love of money. Luke chapter 16 is divided into five parts:

- a. Verses 1-8 deal with Jesus commendation of the greedy and unfaithful hence the parable of unjust steward.
- b. Verses 9-13: Jesus applied the story to His greed audience, the Pharisees.
- c. Verses 14-15: The greedy Pharisees reaction and Jesus reply.
- d. Verses 16-18: A faithful steward- John the Baptist.
- e. 19-31: The parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.

The above segments are arranged in such a way that the first four sections serve as preliminary and preparation to the understanding of the context of the fifth section, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31). However, the major thrusts of the chapter are the parable of the unjust steward (Luke 16:1-13) and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31). Each of these five sections contains a common theme, greed: 1. the unfaithful steward acted out of greed. 2. Jesus applied this account to the Pharisees, who were lovers of money and addressed to a common philosophy that riches imply righteousness. 3. The end result of the rich man indicated that wealth do not work out like the Pharisees would have predicted.

The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) could be delimited to preceding section, the parable of the Unjust Steward, (Luke 16.1-13). It is closely associated with the account of the rich man and Lazarus (16.19-31) in at least four ways:

1. Riches are a major consideration in both. The words, Ἦτο δὲ ἄνθρωπός "There was a certain rich man" begin both verses 1 and 19.
2. Time and eternity are the underlying realities in both situations. What a person does now will affect his eternity (verses 9 and 25).
3. Death is an unchangeable fact which must be faced. "When ye fail" (in verse 9) leaves no room for an "if." In verse 22, it is the natural expectation that as "the beggar died" so "the rich man also died."
4. The Lord's words "Ye cannot serve God and "Mammon" (verse 13) bothered the Pharisees (verse 14), and opened the way for the Lord to deal with their problems further in verses 14-31.
5. The Parable of the Unjust Steward, then, talks about a man who did use his limited time to prepare for the future. Jesus explains from the parable that believers should prepare for death and eternity by using wisely the temporal things they now possess. His concluding words about the parable upset the Pharisees (verse 14) and provided a link for His next words to them hence the parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

Nevertheless, some scholars argue the coherence and arrangement of chapter 16 of Saint Luke. Those who argue the coherence of the chapter argue that verses 15-18 create a problem in chapter 16 as a whole. For example, it is difficult to connect the sayings of the inner heart, the law of the kingdom (16:16-17), and the law of divorce (16:18), in a coherence sequence. What does the issue of divorce (16:18) have to do with the proper use of possessions (16:1-13) and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)? Johnson and Harrington (1991) in quest to resolve the above problem suggest that there is coherence in the whole chapter as it is similar with the Israel's interpretation. They assert thus:

The author of Damascus rule identifies the three nets of Satan that entrap Israel as three shame forms of righteousness, the first is Fornication, the second is riches and

the third is profanation of the Temple. Fornication is further explained as interpretation of divorce more liberal than that of the sect and profanation of the Temple as observing purity regulation in the sexual situations. – Idolatry, divorce and possessions are joined together (p.249).

Green (1997) upholds the above belief and argues that Luke 16 still directs its sayings to the Pharisees. He points out that 14-18 provide the base for the understanding of the previous teachings directed to the Pharisees and the subsequent ones. He further argues that 16-18 provides Jesus a base from which to demonstrate that his ministry is not a contravention of God's will as expressed in the scriptures. On the whole, Green (1997) further states that this section fits in very well. The whole sections of the chapter involve the social restructuring which is major aim of the gospel according to Luke. Jesus is redefining the kingdom of God from the angle of total commitments to God, not money or self, and calling his hearers to respond totally to him, even in the difficult areas of divorce and remarriage.

The variation as per the audience to whom the parable is addressed poses a serious problem if we take Luke chapter 16 as a unit. While some scholars identify the audience as the Pharisees and disciples, others identify the audience as the Pharisees alone. Bock (1987) for example upholds that Jesus addresses the entire chapter 16 to both the disciples and Pharisees while Green (1997) maintains that the audience remains the Pharisees on the ground that that though there is little shift in 16:1 to disciples, the disciples in 16:1 demonstrate that the disciples' here is not a distinctive group from the Pharisee. Those who hold that the audience is Pharisees maintain that the Pharisees were not known for being rich but that they are money lovers and hypocrites as in verse 15. Kreitzer (1992) however, submits that:

There are thematic links between the various sections of the chapter 16:1-8, and 16:19-31.... In spite of the fact that it is quite obvious that a change of audience is mentioned in

verses 14-15 and in 16:1, it is specifically said the disciples are provided with the parable of the unjust Steward, while in 16:14-15 the Pharisees are specifically mentioned as the intended audience of what follows, including the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus (p.140).

However, the research maintains that Luke 16 as a whole is clearly a literary unit, firmly linked to the previous and subsequent narratives.

a. Characters Involved

Though a name is signed to one character of the parable, yet it is taken figuratively that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) paints a picture of social interaction of Luke's community, social strata that exist between the rich and the poor. This understanding is further deepened by the imageries that are used to portray the conditions of the rich man and the poor man. These conditions are represented in the imageries of: *πορφύραν* (a purple robe), *βύσσον* (fine linen) and *εὐφραινόμενος* (merriment and splendour) describing the condition of the rich man; and *πυλῶνα* (gate, barricade, barrier, etc), *εἰλκωμένος* (covered with sores), *ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι* (hungry and desiring to be satisfied) and *πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης* (crump that fall from the table); describing the condition of the poor man (Lazarus). Purple and fine linen in ancient world of the New Testament were the dress code of the rich man and this exemplifies not only his richness but his position in society, a sign of wealth and royalty or official power.

According to Scott (1989), purple and fine linen place the man among the elites and among the top of the social scale. In stark contrast to the rich man's costume is Lazarus' sores, although there is no mention of Lazarus' articles of clothing, it is submitted that the skin acquires the role of dress in this context in order to describe the contrasting nature of the poor

Lazarus from rich man. The writer is not intending to describe the architectural masterpiece of the house in the rich man lives but a great gulf or blockade that exists between the rich man and Lazarus. While the rich man was inside making merriment, the poor man was outside hungry. The poor man, Lazarus was famished and even longed to eat crump that fell from the rich man's table. The gate shows that there was a barricade that hindered Lazarus from entering to eat from the rich man's table.

Considering the two figures aforementioned, which of the two should be considered as the main character in the parable? Many hold that that the story is told from the perspective of the rich man, consequence of the fact that he is mentioned first in the story, has major speaking role and his concern initiated halves of the dialogue; nonetheless, the two characters are very important and none should be pushed to the background.

b. Theme and Event

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) is not all about wealth and poverty in general terms, it is specifically a warning to the wealthy for their neglect of the poor; advocates the right use of wealth and the repulsive of exploitation and injustice (Snodgrass, 2008). Hence the major thrust of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is not merely condemning the rich because they are rich or because they are enjoying their money nor commending the poor because they are poor. It stands to correct unhealthy social interaction between the rich and the poor.

That is to say that the consequence of social strata is considered to be the theme of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). If such is the case, those puerile and unworthy interpretations which see the parable as teaching that in the life to come all our

earthly situations will suffer reversal, the rich will automatically be poor, and the poor will automatically become rich become obsolete. That is not so, the rich are not all deserving hell because they are rich, and the poor are not all deserving of heaven because they are poor. It is possible for the rich man to use his riches wisely and it is possible for the poor man to curse God in his poverty.

Neither is parable an over-ornate picture of a very simple notion that if we give to charity we shall buy a place in heaven, and if we neglect the poor recumbent at our gates we shall qualify for hell. The teaching of Jesus should not be charged with crude over-simplifications of this nature. It is likely that the rich man in the parable gave handsomely to charities and won some recognition of his great munificence. The trouble with this man was that he did nothing for the poor at his gate. He pulled down the blinds of his limousine as he passed list he should see and be disturbed.

To be a separatist is tempting for churchman, or someone gifted in the world of culture. Not that it is wrong to be rich. But if all that can be said of a man is that he is rich, dressed in purple, and finest linen, and feasts in great magnificence each day, then from eternal angle his condition is perilous. The searching question is what has one does with his riches? If it is for separatism from one fellow in the place and time of need then one should change his mind, the other word for which is religious word, repentance. Repentance here as Luke emphasizes involves sharing of one's possessions, right use of wealth and the repudiation of exploitation and injustice.

Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and who has food must do likewise.... To tax collectors he said, 'collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.... To the soldiers, he said 'do not extort money

from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages
(Luke 3:11-14).

To Luke, repentance is the active practice of sharing possessions with neighbours. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the rich man was condemned in Hades because he refused to repent and to share his possession with Lazarus at the gate. His plea to send Lazarus on an errand to his five brothers implies that if they do not repent (that is giving almsgiving and charity) they will come to the same torment.

c. Structure and Movement of the Text

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) is poised with difficulty in understanding the way and manner in which it is presented. The parable does not introduce its authority figure from the outset rather the story begins with a contrast between two men who are worlds apart from each other. After describing each in turn in verses 19-21, Jesus relates their deaths in reverse order, the beggar finds himself in Abraham's bosom and the rich man in Hades in verse 22-23.

In verse 24, the story shifts from narrative discourse to direct discourse, and Abraham appears as a third, unifying figure who explains the judgments meted out to the other two men. From thence, the rich man and Abraham carry on a dialog until the end of the parable with no reference to Lazarus who ought to be the principal figure in the parable. A turning point in the dialog appears in verse 26, when, after learning about the unbridgeable gulf separating the two speakers (the rich man and Abraham), the rich man stops pleading for himself and turn his thought to his brother who are still on earth. This caused many to dissect the passage into two halves, verses 16-26 traditional and 27-31 additional. Some suggest that the narrative stops at verse 26 and Luke simply embellished a popular story of the rich tax collector and a

poor scholar called *Bar Ma'jan* to the above (Blomberg, 1990). However, the assumption whether the structure in verse 19-26 is original and verse 27-31 being a traditional story or later Christian addition is not clear.

4.3 Textual Problems of the Text (Luke 16.19-31)

The discussion here is to expose and resolve the textual problems prevalent in our text. This will enhance a proper translation of the text. This involves examination of the text verse by verse.

In verse 19, the story starts abruptly with the omission of the phrase *εἶτε δέ καί ἑτέραν παραβολήν* (and he told another parable) hence throwing doubt whether the text is a factual story of a historical figures and events or whether it is a parable. The reason for this omission is not really clear. However, later manuscripts like *Syrus Curetonianus (syc)*, *D*, *θ 579* insert the phrase *εἶτε δέ καί ἑτέραν παραβολήν* to clear the above doubt, yet it seems that there is a very high degree of uncertainty concerning the above reading. However, there is no modern New Testament scholar who would agree that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) is an actual story, based on the fact that it appears in a collection of parables, and uses the exact same introductory words- *Ἄνθρωπος δέ τις* (but a certain man)- which Luke uses to introduce several other parables.

Also in verse 19, manuscripts like Papyrus 75 inserted the phrase, *πλούσιος ὀνόματι Νεύης* (rich man by name). This is to correct the anomaly that a name is assigned to the poor man leaving the rich man, who seems to be the principal actor, without a name. *Νεύης* is probably a scribal error for *Ninenhs*, (Metzger, 1971) and Grobal (1960) suggests that the Papyrus 75 insertion of the rich man's name as *Neves* is to mean Nineveh yet Grobal's suggestion is

uncertain since there is no definite connection between the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) and old city of Nineveh.

The rich man is also given the name '*Finæus*' in Pseudo-Cyprian, '*Finees*' in *Priscillian* document (A.D. 385) and '*Amonofits*' in Peter of Riga (Marshall, 1978). The origin of these names is still uncertain. Marshall (1978) is of the opinion that the names have Old Testament connotations: "*Amonotis* is a form of *Amenophis*, a name of several Pharaohs. *Finæus* and *Finees* may be based on the *Phinehas* who appears along with Eleazer in Ex. 6: 25, Num. 25: 7, 11; Joshua 22:13, 31ff; 24:33. Some scholars hold on to these connotations while Johnson and Harrington (1991) argue that there is a connection of the parable with the parable in 12:16-21, found only in Luke. First, no name was supplied to the rich man in either parable, and second, feast and celebration were involved in both.

Another name asserted to the rich man by other manuscripts like Vulgate is *Dives*. Hultgren (1992) suggests that *Dives* is name deduced from the opening of the Vulgate. *Dives* is a Latin adjective meaning rich. However, most of the suggestions given as the name of the rich man have to do with negative and sometimes corrupt figures of ancient times, figures that attracted judgments of God upon themselves. This is to justify that the rich man's torment in hades.

On the other hand, a name is ascribed to a figure who looks to be less important in the parable, hence the name Lazarus. Lazarus is short abbreviation of Eleazar, meaning 'God's help'. Nolland (1993) suggests that the reason a name 'Lazarus' is assigned to poor man in the parables may be as a result of the following: 1. prevents the parable from applying to every poor person, or poverty from being considered the determining factor for piousness and godliness. 2. It implies the part of reversal: the rich man was significant in this world and

insignificant in the afterlife. 3. It gives a link with Abraham in Gen. 15:2. 4. It makes God appear to be the one who helps. Cave (1969) argues that the relationship of Lazarus with Abraham recalls the relationship of Abram and Eleazer in Gen 15. He suggests from his study of the Babylonian Talmud that by every indication, Eleazer was a Gentile, and the parable was to attack the Jewish popular view of superiority, that by virtue of lineage, descendants of Abraham will enjoy the final salvation. Lazarus being outside the gate portrays that the Gentiles were outsiders in the kingdom of God, but the relationship of Abraham and Eleazer in Gen. 15 depicts that even the Gentiles have a share in God's kingdom. Others like Cave (1969) in contrast argues that Lazarus represent is the Jewish people, ill-treated by earthly powers, such as the Romans and their underlings; and *Dives* and his five brothers are the Herods: Herod the Great, Archelaus, Philip, Antipas, Agrippa 1, Agrippa. Nevertheless, this interpretation destroys the connection with the context.

Also the phrase, *καθ' ἡμέραν λαμπρῶς* in verse 19 is very difficult to translate. Literally it can be translated thus: according to day shining. However, New Revised Standard Version suggestion, 'who feasted sumptuously every day,' is very close to the meaning otherwise the issue of feasting is not directly featured in the text. The rich man's sumptuous way of life is now described. The word *ἐνεδιδύσκετο*-imperfect- described that it was the rich man's custom to wear the purple garments and fine underwear always or daily.

In verse 20, The structure of the sentence is altered by the insertion of *ἦν* and *ὅς* in some versions like *A, W, θ, f¹, f³ pm* and Latin versions: *syc, %, B, L*. The word *ἐβέβλητο*, is pluperfect of the word *βάλλω* (to throw) and it could mean that Lazarus had been laid by friends in a suitable place for begging. But more probably, it means he was lying; the implication is that he was ill or crippled. That could mean that Lazarus lies at the rich man's

gate continuously for begging. However, Luke paints the portrait of Lazarus' condition as *ἐβέβλητο πρὸς τὸν πυλῶνα αὐτοῦ*, (dumped at the rich man's gate). Marshall (1978) suggests that since *ἐβέβλητο* appears in pluperfect in our text may mean 'dumped by the friends' the same word used in Matt. 8:6, 14, and 9 and Rev. 2:2, for people who are confined to bed through illness. This makes the condition of Lazarus unbearable. Nolland (1993) suggests that the word indicates Lazarus' inability to choose freely where he will be. Nevertheless, short descriptions of the rich man and the Lazarus provide a brief social description of the two men. They are two very different men in an essentially two-tier society of 'haves' and 'have-nots. Marshall (1978) suggests the *πυλῶνα* refers to a large, ornamental gateway to a city or a mansion the word that is seen in Matt. 26:71, Acts 10:17; 12:13f; 14:13.

In verse 21, the word *ἐπιθυμῶν* is an exact word in the parable of Good Samaritan, Luke 15:27, it may represent 'the unfulfilled longing' for *τῶν ψιχίδων* (the crumbs). The word *τῶν ψιχίδων* is added in most manuscripts: %, A,D,W, θ. Hultgren (2000) states that it is to make the things that fall under the table certain that the word, *τῶν ψιχίδων*- 'the crumbs or morsels' as in Matt. 15:27 is inserted in those manuscripts. Cave (1969) echoes the suggestion of Wellhausen, "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table and connection with the dogs, might be reminiscent of 'even the dogs under the table eat of the crumbs under the table eat of the children's crumbs' (Mark 7:28) in the story of Syro-Phoenician women that is omitted in Luke" (p.324). Hence its use in passive is suggesting to mean that the crumbs does not fell willingly from the table, but pieces of bread which the guests used to wipe their hands and then threw away under the table as suggested by (Marshall, 1978). However, no evidence is provided and description strange. Nevertheless, Snodgrass (2008) supports that what the poor was longing for, was not the food that fell from the rich man's table, "but pieces of bread used to wipe the hands that were then thrown under

the table” (p.425). Historically, before the invention of napkins or handkerchiefs, flat bread was used, especially in rich people’s houses, to wipe their hands and mouth during a meal. It is assumed this is what Luke is referring to here as things falling from the table. Other manuscripts refer to it as crumbs.

The phrase, *οἱ κύνες ἔρχόμενοι*, (the dogs coming), creates a lot of uncertainties here. Whether the dogs intensify the suffering of Lazarus or mitigate it is unclear. Where the dogs come from is uncertain, from the rich man’s house or being wild dogs. If dogs are socially regarded as ceremonially unclean in Palestine during the time of Jesus, it will be difficult to regard the dogs as coming from the rich man’s house. Derrett (1960) argues that the dogs came from the rich man’s house as pets, or at his gate as guard dogs. Marshall (1978) suggests the dogs treated Lazarus as a dead person; in contrast, Nolland (1989) submits that, “it would be possible that to take the dogs’ action as an expression of the compassion that Lazarus’ fellow human beings have failed to provide” (p.829). However, the strongest option is that Lazarus lying at the gate and licked by dogs suggests that Lazarus was treated like an outcast in the mist of plenty.

For *καὶ οἱ κύνες ἔρχόμενοι ἐπέλειχον*, (even also the dogs came and licked), some other manuscripts like Codex Washington, *f*^{d3}, and the Koine replace *ἐπέλειχον* with *ἀπελειχον*, (to lick away). Ms 157 changes *ἐπέλειχον* to *περιλειον*, (to lick around). Nonetheless, the best reading is still *ἐπέλειχον* (to lick at the sores) as in the following manuscripts: Sinatic, Alexandrine, Vatican, Paris, Tbilisi, Athos, Minuscules: 33, 1241, 2542. *Και ουδεις εδιδου αυτω*, (And no one gave to him) is inserted in the following manuscripts: family 13, Clementine edition of Vulgate, this portrays the helpless situation of Lazarus.

In verse 22, the second section of the parable started with a phrase *ἐγένετο δὲ* (it came to pass) as in Luke 3.21. This suggests that the parable has some eschatological connections. Secondly, the word, *ἀπενεχθήναι* (was carried) by angels poses a serious textual problem. The imagery is unusual, not even found in rabbinic sources. Grobel (1960) suggests that the angels' action is a Jewish substitute of the Egyptian version of the story. This suggestion is also uncertain. However, the point is that the divine care is lavished upon Lazarus but most importantly to substitute the burial ceremony which was not mentioned against Lazarus. The word, *κόλπον* (bosom) is a metaphor suggesting the following:

1. A child lying on its parents lap, as in John 1:18
2. Being gathered to one's fathers' as in Genesis 15.15

However, we should probably combine suggestions 1 & 2 to mean that the poor man enjoys close fellowship with Abraham at the Messianic banquet as in Luke 13.29.

In verse 23, there are two textual problems, the word- *ᾗδη* (hades)- may suggest the final abode or judgment. *καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾗδη*, 'and he was in hades. Bauckham (1963) poises that the word "hades" can be traced as the progressive changes in the meaning of the hades: hades "in Greek mythology was originally the proper name for a god of the underworld and the underworld was called the house of hades. The regular use of hades as the name of the place of the dead may have originated with Homer" (p.21). The idea developed in the inter-testamental period and in Jewish Apocalyptic literature, which referred to hades as an intermediate place where all souls awaited for Judgement (Enoch 51:1, 22:3ff). Hades is the Greek word closest to the Old Testament term, *Sheol*. Both denote the place of the dead, not necessarily the place of eschatological torment for the wicked. Originally, hades was the proper name of a god of the underworld and later developed to mean a place of torment. The parable infers that hades is a place of torment and anguish, a permanent place of torment,

even with fire. Hades here supports the idea of intermediate abode of souls before the final judgement. Marshall (1978) quoting 1 Enoch 22 says that the allusion to final abode of the dead is less likely.

However, the contrasting idea of a great gulf between Lazarus in Abraham's bosom and the rich man in hades, while yet seeing and hearing each other, creates problems of harmony in the parable. (Bock 1987) suggests that the communication between the rich man and Lazarus depicts the Jewish imagery of the righteous and the unrighteous seeing each other at hades (2 Esdr. 4; Ezra 7: 85; 9:3; 2 Bar. 51: 5-6). To avoid these anomalies about hades, some manuscripts like Sainaic, Vulgate, Mcion; and Tibilisi and lectionary 2211 replaced *ἐν τῷ ᾅδῃ*, (in the Hades), with *ἀναπαυόμενοι*, meaning resting or having refreshment or repose. This actually looks incorrect for there is no way someone will have rest in Hades because it is a place of torment.

In verse 24, the word *βάψῃ* (to dip) takes the accusative of the thing dipped and the genetic of that into which it is dipped- *ἄκροῦ* signifies high point top. It is same word used in Mark 13: 27, Matthew 24.31. The phrase, *Πάτερ Ἀβραάμ ἐλέησόν με*, (Father Abraham, have mercy on me), is purely Jewish. Father Abraham connotes that the rich man was a Jew, and even at death he still insists that on his kinship with Abraham, secondly, the phrase, *ἐλέησόν με*, (have mercy on me) is a typical Jewish prayer. *Τέκνον* (child) is the same word addressed to the elder son in the parable of prodigal son, indicating the rich man's kinship. Fitzmyer (1990) on the grounds of calling the rich man *Τέκνον* (child) argues that the rich man represents the Jews. Traditionally Jews claim superiority over the nations of the earth. Consequently, it serves as a warning to the Jews that their claim of superiority ends here on earth. *καὶ πέμψον Λάζαρον ἵνα βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ὕδατος καὶ καταψύξῃ τὴν*

γλωσσάν μου (and send Lazarus that he might dip his finger in water and cool my tongue) suggests that the rich man was in torment while Lazarus had access to water.

In verse 25, the word *ᾠδε* (in this place) is represented with *ὄδε* in variations like *f^d*, 1424, pc, though the reason for the representation is not clear. It is not clear whether Abraham's use of the word *τέκνιον* to address the rich man is merely formal or represents an acceptance of his claim to kingship. The word, *ἀπέλαβες* -2nd person singular 2nd aorist active indicative (have received off) meaning that the time of enjoyment has been ended once and for all. *παρακαλεῖται*- 3rd person singular present passive indicative- he being comforted.

In verse 26, *ἐν* is replaced with *ἐπι* in some manuscripts like A, D, W, *θ f^d, f^{d3}, syc*. Besides, the replacement has not altered the meaning of the text. The definite article *οἱ* is inserted to *ἐκεῖθεν* may be, trying to make it a definite place not merely a figurative abode. Still in verse 26, the phrase, *καὶ ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις* creates a lot of difficulty in translation and interpretation. Hence different translations have been suggested: “in spite of all this”, “in all these religions”, “in addition to all these”, “because of all these.” Many manuscripts support “in addition to all these things”.

Χάσμα μέγα, ‘great gulf’ or “unbridgeable space between Abraham and the place of torture” is a strong image of separation between the rich man and Lazarus in the afterlife. The insertion of ‘οἱ’ in the following manuscripts: Syraic, Alexandrinus, Regius, Washington Codex, Tbilisi, Athos, family 1 (*f¹*), Manuscripts found in 9th century (33), papyri, Coptic version (Bohairic) Payprus 75, Sainaitic, Vatican, Codex Bezae, family 13 (*f¹³*), emphasizes on (*ὁμῶν*-genitive plural) (your people) which indicates the rich man is not alone in Hades. Fitzmyzer (1990) suggests that *μεταξὺ ἡμῶν καὶ ὁμῶν χάσμα μέγα ἐστήρικται* (has been fixed

between you we and you a great gulf) indicates that God himself made it so that in afterlife the righteous and the unrighteous do not mix. Schottroff and Stegemann (1986) argue that the imagery represents the gulf which separated the rich and the poor in the present world. The word *ἑσθίηται* in verse 26 is 3rd person singular perfect passive indicate which can be translated as ‘having been fixed’ thus meaning that gulf has been permanently created that one can unfix it. *θέλοντες* - present active indicative participle nominative plural masculine- ones- being willing- keep desiring to cross to the other side. This is referring that the gulf is made for impossible journey of people from both sides.

In verse 27, the word *Ἀβραάμ*, is interposed *πατήρ* (father) may be to be specific the person he is referring to. In verse 28 the word *διαμαρτύρηται*- 3rd person plural present passive subjective- he may thoroughly witness and *ἀκουσάτωσαν*-3rd person plural 1st aorist active imperfect -they are hearing shows that the activities of preaching was going on at the same time of the rich man’s request to meet his brothers. To indicate the proper father he is referring to and consistency in the conversation, some manuscripts: Codex Bezae, 579, Vulgate manuscripts, Syrus Sinaiticus and Syrus Curetonianus, insert ‘Abraham’ after *πατήρ*, ‘father.’

In verse 29, *λέγει* (he says) read *λέγει δε αὐτῷ* (but he himself) in some other versions like A,D,W,θ f1, f13 and latin version syc, *ph*. The insertion of *αὐτῷ* is probably the mark of emphasis nothing more. The following manuscripts insert *αὐτῷ* (to him) to emphasise that Abraham’s saying is directed to the rich man. Rather than *ὑμῶν* (genitive plural) meaning your people: Alexandrine, Codex Bezae (Cantabrigiensis), Tbilisis, Athos, family 13, Latin tradition, Syraic versions-Curetonian, Peshitta, Harclean, papyrus 75, Sinaitic, Vatican, Latin, other minuscules, 579, 892,1241,2542, lectionaries, 844, 2211 and few documents in Codex

Bezae, Sinaic Syriac version, *Bohairiac* version of church fathers. Moses and Prophets signify the Old Testament books. It is clear in their teachings about the duty of the rich to the poor. The following Old Testament texts emphasise the duty of the rich to the poor, (Ex. 22:25-27, 23:21; Lev. 19:9-10, 23:22, 25:25-28; Deut. 14:28-29, 15:2-14, 24:12-21, 26:12-13; Psalms; Prov. 31:9; Isa. 1:17, 16:3-4, 58:10; Ezek. 18:1-32; Dan. 4:27; Zech. 7:10).

In verse 30, *O* (the one) refers to the rich man. The literal translation of *πορευθῆ* is 'should go' but it is replaced with *εγερθη* (is raised) in Papyrus 75, Codex Sinaiticus. Manuscript 579 use *αναστη* (3rd person sing masculine 2 aorist subjective), that is 'to rise'. This probably indicates the readers' allusion about the resurrection of Jesus (9:22, 11:29ff, 13:32), or the Lazarus in John 11. Scholars are yet to conclude whether the wordings of verse 27-31 should be regarded as a post-Easter addition, or the language of the folktale is reworded to give the parable an ironical twist in the light of the resurrection (Fitzmyer, 1990 and Seccombe, 1983).

In verse 31, *εγερθη* (place) is also inserted in some versions p75, 579 pc, this emphasis is to show that the message is not from the dead but authority in charge of the place where they are gathering signifies in the parable as Abraham. Other variations insert *και απελθη προς αυτοις* (If someone should rise from you). However, the possibility is couched in terms of resurrection, rather than simply a messenger from dead.

4.4 Presentation of Greek Text

Bible works 6 presents the text as follows:

Luke 16:19-31

¹⁹ Ἦτο δὲ ἄνθρωπός τις πλούσιος καὶ ἐνεδύετο πορφύραν καὶ στολὴν βυσσίνην, εὐφραίνόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν μεγαλοπρεπῶς.

²⁰ Ἦτο δὲ πτωχὸς τις ὀνομαζόμενος Λάζαρος, ὅστις ἔκειτο πεπληγμένος πλησίον τῆς πύλης αὐτοῦ ²¹ καὶ ἐπεθύμει νὰ χορτασθῆ ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τοῦ πλουσίου· ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ κύνες ἐρχόμενοι ἔγλειφον τὰς πληγὰς αὐτοῦ.

²² Ἀπέθανε δὲ ὁ πτωχὸς καὶ ἐφέρθη ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ· ἀπέθανε δὲ καὶ ὁ πλούσιος καὶ ἐτάφη.

²³ Καὶ ἐν τῷ ἄδη ὑψώσας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ, ἐνῶ ἦτο ἐν βασάνοις, βλέπει τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν καὶ τὸν Λάζαρον ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτοῦ.

²⁴ Καὶ αὐτὸς φωνάζας εἶπε· Πάτερ Ἀβραάμ, ἐλέησόν με καὶ πέμψον τὸν Λάζαρον, διὰ νὰ βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὕδωρ καὶ νὰ καταδροσίῃ τὴν γλῶσσάν μου, διότι βασανίζομαι ἐν τῇ φλογὶ ταύτῃ·

²⁵ εἶπε δὲ ὁ Ἀβραάμ· Τέκνον, ἐνθυμήθητι ὅτι ἀπέλαβες σὺ τὰ ἀγαθὰ σου ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου, καὶ ὁ Λάζαρος ὁμοίως τὰ κακὰ· τώρα οὗτος μὲν παρηγορεῖται, σὺ δὲ βασανίζεσαι·

²⁶ καὶ ἐκτὸς τούτων πάντων, μεταξὺ ἡμῶν καὶ ὑμῶν χάσμα μέγα εἶναι ἐστηριγμένον, ὥστε οἱ θέλοντες νὰ διαβῶσιν ἐντεῦθεν πρὸς ἐσᾶς νὰ μὴ δύνανται, μηδὲ οἱ ἐκείθεν νὰ διαπερῶσι πρὸς ὑμᾶς.

²⁷ Εἶπε δὲ· παρακαλῶ σε λοιπόν, πάτερ, νὰ πέμψῃς αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου·

²⁸ διότι ἔχω πέντε ἀδελφούς· διὰ νὰ μαρτυρήσῃ εἰς αὐτούς, ὥστε νὰ μὴ ἔλθωσι καὶ αὐτοὶ εἰς τὸν τόπον τοῦτον τῆς βασάνου.

²⁹ Λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁ Ἀβραάμ, Ἔχουσι τὸν Μωϋσῆν καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας· ἅς ἀκούσωσιν αὐτούς.

³⁰ Ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· Οὐχί, πάτερ Ἀβραάμ, ἀλλ' ἐὰν τις ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ὑπάγῃ πρὸς αὐτούς, θέλουσι μετανοήσει. ³¹ Εἶπε δὲ πρὸς αὐτόν· Ἐὰν τὸν Μωϋσῆν καὶ τοὺς προφῆτας δὲν ἀκούωσιν, οὐδὲ ἐὰν τις ἀναστηθῆ ἐκ νεκρῶν θέλουσι πεισθῆ.

4.5 Working Translation

19. “But a certain man was rich, and he was clothing himself with purple and well minded linen, making merry sumptuously every day.

20. But a poor named Lazarus who had been thrown at his gate having been ulcerated (full of ulcer).

21. and was desiring to be satiated from the things falling from the table of the rich man even also the dogs came and licked his ulcers.

22. It happened the poor man died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom of Abraham; but the rich man died and was buried.

23. And in the Hades having lifted up his eyes, being in torments, he saw Abraham from far off and Lazarus in his bosoms.

24. And he cried out, “Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus in order that he might dip the tip of his hand in water and might cool my tongue, because I am being pained/anguish in this flame.”

25. But Abraham said “Child, remember that you received in full the good things in your lifetime and Lazarus likewise the bad things, but now here he is comforted but you are being pained.”

26. And in all these things, a great gulf has been fixed between us and your people so that ones willing to step over from here to you are not be able, neither may people cross over from there to us.

27. But he said, “I am begging you therefore father, to send him to my father’s house,

28. for I am having five brothers, so that he may thoroughly bear witness to (warn) them, that they also might not come into this place of the torment.”

29. But Abraham says, “They are having Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them.”

30. But he said, “No father Abraham, but if someone from dead would go to them they will repent.”

31. But he said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if someone rises from the dead.”

4.6 Grammatical and Syntactical Analysis

This involves parsing of some key words and phrases:

v. 19. a. ἐνεδύετο -third person singular imperfect mid indicative

b. εὐφραινόμενος- present mid participle nominative masculine

c. καθ' ἡμέραν μεγαλοπρεπῶς –literary it means thus ‘according to day shining’ and this very is very difficult to translate. NRSV suggests –who feasted sumptuously every day and this is most acceptable.

v. 20. a. ἐβέβλητο -third person singular pluperfect pass indicative of the word βλέπω

b. εἰλκωμένος –perfect passive participle nominative singular masculine-having been ulcerated

v. 21. a. χορτασθῆναι -1aorist pass infinitive–to be filled

b. πιπτόντων - present active participle genitive plural neuter

c. ἀπέλειχον -3rd Person plural imperfect act indicative- were licking

v. 22. a. ἐγένετο - 3rd person singular 2nd aorist middle indicative- of time or event- it occurred.

b. ἀποθανεῖν -2nd aorist active infinitive

c. ἀπέθανεν -third person singular second aorist active indicative

d. ἐτάφη -3rd person singular 2nd aorist passive indicative- he was buried

v. 23. a. ἐπάρας - 1st aorist active participle nominative singular masculine- having lifted up

b. ὄρα -3rd person singular present act indicative

- c. ὑπάρχων - present active participle nominative singular masculine- being
- v. 24. a. φωνήσας -1st aorist active participle nominative singular masculine-having sounded
- b. ἐλέησόν -2nd person plural 1st aorist active imperfect- have mercy
- c. πέμψον -2nd person plural 1st aorist active imperfect- send
- d. καταψύξει - 3rd person singular 2nd aorist active subjunctive- might cool.
- v. 25. a. ἀπέλαβες -2nd person singular 2nd aorist active indicative
- b. μνήσθητι 2nd person singular 1st aorist passive indicative- remember
- c. παρακαλεῖται 3rd person singular present passive indicative- he being comforted
- d. ὀδυνᾶσαι - 2nd person singular present passive indicative –are being in pain.
- v. 26. a. ἐστήρικται - 3rd person singular perfect passive indicate
- b. θέλοντες - present active indicative participle nominative plural masculine- ones-being willing
- c. δύνωνται - 3rd person plural present passive subjunctive- may be able
- d. ὑμῶν - genitive plural
- e. ὑμᾶς - dative plural
- v. 27. πέμψης - 2nd person singular 1 aorist active subjunctive- you should send.
- v. 28. διαμαρτύρηται - 3rd person plural present passive subjunctive- he may thoroughly witness
- v. 29. ἀκουσάτωσαν -3rd person plural 1st aorist active imperfect -they are hearing.
- v. 30. a. πορευθῆ -3rd person singular 2nd aorist active subjunctive- should go
- b. μετανοήσουσιν -3rd person plural future active indicative-they will repent
- v. 31. a. ἀκούουσιν - 3rd person plural present active indicative-they are hearing
- b. ἀναστῆ - 3rd person singular 2nd aorist active subjunctive- should stand up.
- c. πεισθήσονται - 3rd person plural future passive indicative- they will be persuaded

The parable made great use of extra-biblical languages. These words are probably borrowed from Hellenistic and Greco-Roman literature. The words peculiar to the parable are: 1. βύσσον, ‘fine-linen’, is found nowhere in the New Testament, a Semitic loan word widely used by Greek writers. 2. εὐφραϊνόμενος, ‘sumptuously’, depicts Hellenistic or Greco-Roman socialite language. 3. εἰλκωμένος, ‘full of sores’, is a loan word found in tragic and of course from medical writers. 4. ἐπέλειχον, ‘licked’, is not evidenced in elsewhere in Greek. 5. τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου, ‘end of his fingers’, is found in Philo and Josephus. 6. καταψύξη, ‘cool’, is found in Hellenistic writers. 7. ὀδυνῶμαι, ‘am in anguish’, found only in 2:48 and Acts 2:18, used of mental pain is found in poetical writers. 8. χάσμα, ‘Chasm (gulf)’, is a classical and Hellenistic word. These words cannot be found in the Septuagint (Evans, 1990). However, this is presupposing the universality of the Gospel of Luke.

4.7 Semantic Analysis

The delimitation of the text, Luke 16.19-31 has given us the general understanding of the background, structure and analyses of the text. This section is therefore devoted to a verse by verse interpretation of the text. Some words or phrases will be analysed.

Verse 19 a, *δὲ ἄνθρωπός τις πλούσιος* (but a certain rich man). This introductory phrase has no connexion with the preceding section of the chapter. This expression, *δὲ ἄνθρωπός τις πλούσιος* is qualified in the subsequent phrase, *καὶ ἐνεδύετο πορφύραν καὶ στολὴν βυσσίνην* which is translated to be thus: and he used to dress in purple and fine linen. *ἐνεδύετο* is presented in the imperfect tense and suggests habitual conduct. *πορφύραν* (purple), hence purple garment, here referring to the upper garment which is made of costly materials. The word, *βύσσοις*, (fine linen) or hence (fine linen cloth), here is referring to the undergarment.

However, both words suggest expensive clothing. This is suggesting the people in upper class in the society.

Verse 19b, εὐφραϊνόμενος καθ' ἡμέραν μεγαλοπρεπῶς. (enjoying himself splendidly every day). The participial clause is syntactically subordinate to the preceding clause but semantically of the same order. εὐφραϊνόμενος refers probably to the feasts which the rich man gives. The feast is described as μεγαλοπρεπῶ (splendidly), luxuriously) meaning not only splendid but mega splendid. The rich man is described here as a rich man enjoying every luxury of dress and food. Culturally, in ancient Greco-Roman world, linen and purple clothing is a mark of luxurious living, particularly fitting for royalty and those proud of their wealth. Numerous Old Testament texts attest to the above fact (Judges 8.26, Esther 8.15, Prov. 31.22, Daniel 5.7 Acts 16.14 Rev. 18.12 and Rev.19.7, 14, 1Macc. 8.14). Purple and fine linen describes the accoutrements of the royal and wealthy and such suggest depravity. Nolland (1993) suggests that ἔνεδιδύσκετο πορφύραν, (dressed in Purple), is influenced by Markan language in Mark 15:17 and depicts a segment of the upper classes in Palestine who had developed a lifestyle involving the ostentatious display of wealth, which was modelled ultimately upon upper-class practice in Rome. He further argues that the sense of extravagance is likely to prepare the reader already for a negative outcome for the rich man. Though some scholars like Easton and Evans (1960) maintain that the rich man's purple and fine linen clothing does not in any way suggests extravagant luxury, or his daily feasting debauchery. Be that as it may, Luke's idea of social strata and social polarization of the Mediterranean world is reflected here.

Verse 20a δέ πτωχός τις ἦν ὀνόματι Λάζαρος (but a beggar named Lazarus). The word πτωχός used here is the same word and meaning as in Luke 4:18, "good news to the poor".

The religious connotation is also present here. Lazarus, *πτωχός*, in contrast to *πλούσιος* in verse 19 is described in an utter misery and degraded condition. While the rich man is dressed with purple and fine linen, Lazarus is covered with sores and hunger. While the rich man feasts sumptuously every day, Lazarus sit unnoticed at the gate. The poor man stands as a symbol of someone who is so rejected and despised by his fellow human beings that he has to rely solely upon God for his help hence the name Lazarus. No special meaning is to be attached to the name Lazarus even though this is the only time that a personal name occurs in a parable.

Though some scholars like Nolland (1993) advocates that the naming of name Lazarus is from the short abbreviation of Eleazar, meaning ‘God’s help’. The assertion of a name to *πτωχός* (poor) here suggests: 1. To prevent the parable from applying to every poor person, or poverty from being considered the determining factor for pioussness. 2. It implies the part of reversal: the rich man was significant in this world and insignificant in the afterlife. 3. It gives a link with Abraham in Gen. 15:2. 4. It makes God appear to be the one who helps.

Hence Cave (1968) suggests that the relationship of Lazarus with Abraham recalls the relationship of Abram and Eleazer in Gen 15. He suggests that by every indication, Eleazer was a Gentile, and consequently the parable is set to attack the Jewish popular view of superiority, that by virtue of lineage, descendants of Abraham will enjoy the final salvation. Lazarus being outside the gate portrays that the Gentiles were outsiders in the kingdom of God, but the relationship of Abraham and Eleazer in Gen. 15 depicts that even the Gentiles have a share in God’s kingdom. Though Eleazar was a Gentile he was faithful to Abraham likewise faithful Gentiles is welcomed in the new community of God’s people in which Jesus came to establish. Jesus used the parable to warn Israel as Cave (1968) would suggest that in

“the final Judgment the distinction between Israel and Gentiles would disappear, and in the hour of the final judgment occurs the gathering in of Gentiles (Isaiah 2:2f; 56:6f; Mark 11:17; Matt 8:11” (324)

Verse 20b. *ἐβέβλητο πρὸς τὸν πυλῶνα αὐτοῦ* (had been laid at his gate). The pluperfect tense of *ἐβέβλητο* denotes the result of laying down, rather than the act. *πυλῶνα* (gate, or 'entrance) and denotes a gate of a large house or palace while the word *ἤλκωμένος* (covered with sores) is past participle of the word *ἤλκω* (to cause sores). It is uncertain whether *ἐβέβλητο πρὸς τὸν πυλῶνα αὐτοῦ* (dumped at the gate) is the separation that goes with leprosy (Lev. 13-14) or that Lazarus was carried to the gate by friends for his daily begging business.

Verse 20c. *ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τοῦ πλουσίου* (longing to satisfy himself with that which fell from the rich man's table). *ἐπιθυμῶν* is syntactically co-ordinate with *ἤλκωμένος*. The phrase *τῶν πιπτόντων* (that which falls) is poised with two meanings: it refers to that which was thrown away after the meals, or to that which fell from the table during the meals, the former meaning is preferably adopted in this work.

ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ κύνες ἐρχόμενοι ἀπέλειχον τὰ ἔλκη αὐτοῦ (but that, even the dogs used to come and lick his sores) is adding another touch of sorrow to the picture of the poor man's situation. The word *ἀπέλειχον* (to lick), is presented in the imperfect tense and points to a habitual situation of the *ἔλκη* (sore or abscess).

Verse 21a *καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι ἀπὸ τῶν ψιχίων τῶν πιπτόντων ἀπὸ τῆς τραπέζης τοῦ πλουσίου* (longing to satisfy himself with that which fell from the rich man's table).

ἐπιθυμῶν is syntactically co-ordinate with *ἠλκωμένος*. the phrase *καὶ ἐπιθυμῶν χορτασθῆναι*, (and longed to be filled) is exactly the same phrase used in the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:16. It suggests a constant and unfulfilled longing. *ἀπὸ τῶν πιπτόντων* (with the crumbs that fell) meaning from the things that fell from time to time. The language reminds one of Luke 15:16 (the prodigal son) and the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:28). The phrase *τῶν πιπτόντων* 'that which falls' is poised with two meaning: it refers to that which was thrown away after the meals, or to that which fell from the table during the meals, the former meaning is preferably adopted in this work. In the ancient times bread was used in place of modern napkin or serviette. That is to say that what the poor was longing for was not the food that fell from the rich man's table, but pieces of bread used to wipe the hands during meals that were thrown under the table. To make 'things that fall under the table' certain, *τῶν ψιγίων*, (the crumbs or morsels), as in Matt. 15:27, is inserted in some manuscripts.

However, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table and connection with the dogs, might be reminiscent of 'even the dogs under the table eat of the crumbs under the table eat of the children's crumbs' (Mark 7:28) in the story of Syro-Phoenician women that is omitted in Luke. *οἱ κύνες ἐρχόμενοι*, (the dogs coming) creates a lot of uncertainties here, whether the dogs intensify the suffering of Lazarus or mitigate it. Where the dogs come from is also uncertain, from the rich man's house or wild dogs. If dogs are socially regarded as ceremonially unclean in Palestine during the time of Jesus, it will be difficult to regard the dogs as coming from the rich man's house. Marshall (1978) suggests that the dogs treated Lazarus harshly and increased his pains, while Nolland (1990) suggests, it could be possible that the dogs' action is an expression of the compassion that Lazarus' fellow human beings have failed to provide for him.

In verse 22, the phrase *ἐγένετο δὲ ἀποθανεῖν τὸν πτωχόν* (it happened that the beggar died), is compare with the message on Luke 1:8. As to its function *ἐγένετο δε* may be placed under (2) or (4) of the list given there, preferably the latter. *καὶ ἀπενεχθῆναι αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τῶν ἀγγέλων εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ* (and that he was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom) dependent upon *ἐγένετο ἀπέθανεν* (to lead away) or (to carry away) here of the carrying away of the soul after death. The identity of a man and his soul is expressed by the fact that *αὐτὸν* is subject of *ἀπενεχθῆναι* .

The word used here is *κόλπον* 'bosom' the same word used in Luke 6:38. The phrase *τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ* is best understood as referring to the place next to Abraham while reclining at the table this can be compared with the expression in Matt 8:11; John 13:23. *κόλπον τοῦ Ἀβραάμ* (Bosom of Abraham) is found only in Luke's Gospel. It is probably derived from the ancient idea of gather to one's people at death (Gen. 49:33; Num. 27:13; Deut. 32:50). Abraham functions here as the father of his people (Luke 1:73, 3:8, 13:16 and 28:19). Some argue that this infers the parable was addressed to the Jews, precisely the Pharisees, as the rich man and the Gentiles as Lazarus.

The word for bosom (*κόλπον*) is singular in Luke 16:22 but plural (*κόλποις*) in verse 23, apparently with no difference in meaning. However, Hock (1987) suggests that the bosom is parallel to Greek idea of apartments. The bosom of Abraham is clearly an image of honour and may also point to intimacy (as in John 1:18), but most likely Luke intends his reader to think of the eschatological banquet, and Lazarus having the place of honour at the table next to Abraham.

However, scholars are unsure about whether the bosom of Abraham connotes a parental image as in John 1:18 or a banquet image, with a place of honour suggested as in John 13:23. Marshall (1976) suggests the metaphor may suggest either a picture of a child lying on its parent's lap; or the proximity of a guest to the host at banquet; or being gathered together to one's father; and he suggests that 'bosom of Abraham' depicts that the divine care lavished upon Lazarus. At death, Lazarus was carried away (*ἀπενεχθήναι*) by the angels to the bosom (*κόλπον*) of Abraham, while the rich man was buried. The idea of denial of burial for Lazarus is uncertain. Whether the imagery is the reversal of conditions to honour Lazarus in death or to disgrace him is vague. Green (1994) asserts, "In Jewish tradition, to be refused burial, to be left exposed as carrion for scavenger animals was tantamount to bearing the curse of God" (p.607). This portrays that in the community of Luke, burial is highly important. It is not clear whether Lazarus is suffering under a curse from God. May be his refusal of burial was his final disgrace. "On the value of proper burial of Jewish burial (Deut. 29:26, Jer. 8:1-2; 16:1-4; Ezek. 29:5; Tob. 1:16-2:10). However, that the angels carried Lazarus depict an honour at death on the side of Lazarus.

However, the parable supports the reversal of conditions at death. The idea of angels carrying the soul of a dead person is unusual. Grobel (1960) re-echoed Bonnet's suggestion that the angels are Jewish substitutes of 'Horus or the falcon of Horus or bark of death' (the bearers of dead) in Egyptian version of the story. This suggestion is not without problems, for it is not certain whether the parable of the rich man and Lazarus is a replica of an Egyptian folktale.

Nevertheless Abraham takes the place of God in the whole story. Grobel (1960) suggests that Abraham must be a Jewish substitute for the pagan god Osiris. While Nolland (1990) asserts that the story deals with the deaths of the two figures in reversed order. He further states the

difference between the posthumous fates of Lazarus and the rich man is expressed in the contrasting phrases ‘carried off’ and ‘buried.’ Some Jewish tradition and literature depicts their heroes who were carried to heaven: Enoch (Gen. 5:24, Hermas 2.2.7, Lives 8.31) was taken to heaven alive; Elijah was also carried to heaven alive (2 Kings 2:11); Jewish tradition holds that Moses was carried to heaven (Deut. 34:5).

The word translated hades in verse 23, καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾗδῃ (and in Hades) is the same word used in Luke 10:15. The phrase ἐπάρας τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ (raising his eyes) is preparing the way for ὄρα, compare with the expression in Luke 6:20. ὑπάρχων ἐν βασάνοις (being in torment), parenthetical insertion, describing his situation in Hades. βασάνοις is also the same word in as verse 28, (torment, torture) .ὄρᾳ τὸν Ἀβραάμ ἀπὸ μακρόθεν (he saw Abraham far away), yet within hearing distance. καὶ Λάζαρον ἐν τοῖς κόλποις αὐτοῦ (and Lazarus at his bosom) is dependent upon ὄρα.

καὶ ἐν τῷ ᾗδῃ, (and he was in Hades). ‘Hades’ is the Greek word closest to the Old Testament term, ‘Sheol.’ Both denote the place of the dead, not necessarily the place of eschatological torment for the wicked. Originally, Hades was the proper name of a god of the underworld. The parable infers that Hades is a place of torment and anguish, a permanent place of torment, even with fire. If we go with Kreitzer’s description, Hades and Abraham’s bosom are located in the same compartments. Hades here supports the idea of intermediate abode of souls before the final judgement. 1 Enoch 22, “the allusion to final abode of the dead is less likely.” However, the contrasting idea of a great gulf between Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom and the rich man in Hades, while yet seeing and hearing each other, creates problems of harmony in the parable. Bock suggests that the communication between the rich man and Lazarus depicts the Jewish imagery of the righteous and the unrighteous seeing each

other at Hades (2 Esdr. 4 Ezra 7: 85; 9:3; 2 Bar. 51: 5-6). To avoid these anomalies about Hades some manuscripts (Sainaic, Vulgate, Mcion; and Tibilisi and lectionary 2211) replaced *ἐν τῷ ἄδη*, 'in the Hades', with *αναπαυομενόν*, 'resting or having refreshment or repose.'

In verse 24 *καὶ αὐτὸς φωνήσας εἶπεν* (and he raising his voice said) hence, (and he called out). *Πάτερ Ἀβραάμ* (Father Abraham), compare word in Luke 3:8. The phrase, *ἐλέησόν με* (have pity on me); the aorist tense points to a specific act of pity as indicated by *πέμψον*, etc. *πέμψον Λάζαρον* (send Lazarus), that is send him over to this place. *ἵνα βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ ὕδατος* (in order to dip the tip of his finger in water). Strictly speaking the dipping precedes the going over. This implies that *πέμψον* means not only 'order to go' but also 'order to do'.

βάψῃ 'to dip', here with genitive it means that into which something is dipped. *ἄκρον* (tip) of a finger and (top) of a mountain has the root meaning. *καὶ καταψύξῃ τὴν γλῶσσάν μου* (and to cool my tongue) suggests only a very insignificant alleviation. The word is the same word used in Luke 1:64. *καταψύξῃ* (to cool off or to refresh). *ὀδυνῶμαι ἐν τῇ φλογὶ ταύτῃ* (I am in agony in these flames) as in Luke 2:48. *φλογὶ* (flame) here in a collective sense, (flames of fire).

Abraham plays a principal position in the parable. However, it is ridiculous to equate God with the Egyptian god Si- Osiris. The alternative is to substitute a prominent figure in the Jewish history. Fitzmyer (1990) claims that he who showed no mercy to the poor beggar at his door during his earthly life now seeks for mercy from Abraham and implicitly from God. The above is argued on the basis that Abraham must be a Jewish substitute for the pagan god Osiris. This depicts significantly the foreign influence. If it is a Gentile story told by a Jew,

there is no way a Jew would equate their monotheistic God to the gods of the Gentiles; hence, to show Osiris' prominence, he equates him with Abraham, who is prominent in the Jewish history. *Πάτερ Ἀβραάμ*, (Father Abraham), have mercy on me. Father Abraham connotes that the rich man was a Jew, and even at death still insists that on his kingship with Abraham. *ἐλέησόν μέ* (have mercy on me) is a typical Jewish prayer.

καί πέμψον τόν Λάζαρον, διὰ νά βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον τοῦ δακτύλου αὐτοῦ εἰς ὕδωρ καί νά καταδροσίῃ τήν γλῶσσάν μου, (and send Lazarus that he might dip his finger in water and cool my tongue), suggests that the rich man was in torment while Lazarus had access to water.

The phrase, *ἵνα βάψῃ τὸ ἄκρον* (that he may dip) is first aorist active subjunctive of *βάπτω*, common verb, to dip. *ὑδατος* (in water) genitive, the specifying case, water and not something else. *καταψύξῃ* (cool) First aorist active subjunctive of *καταψύχω*, a late Greek compound, to cool off or to make something cool. This expression is seen only here in the New Testament yet common in medical books signifying that the author is a medical person. *ὅτι ὀδυνῶμαι* (for I am in anguish), the active has a causative sense to cause intense pain.

In verse 25 the word *τέκνον* (child or my child), implies that the rich man is still considered as belonging to the people of Abraham. *τέκνον*,(my child) is the same word addressed to the elder son in the parable of prodigal son, indicating the rich man's kinship. On the grounds of calling the rich man 'child,' many argue that the rich man represents the Jews. Traditionally Jews claim superiority over the nations of the earth. And the word *μνήσθητι* (remember) is supporting the above and pointing to what he was supposed to know.

ἀπέλαβες σὺ τὰ ἀγαθὰ σου (you received to the full your good things during/in your lifetime). *ἀπέλαβες* means usually (to receive back), but here 'to receive to the full' as in Luke 6:24). *τὰ ἀγαθὰ σου* does not mean your possessions (Luke 12:18) but 'the good things that were your share', or 'your share of blessings'. The rich man's good thing in this life can be deduced from his dressed in purple and fine linen and daily sumptuous feast (Luke 16:19). For *ζωῆ* meaning lifetime. *ζωῆ* (life) is used non-theologically of earthly life as in Luke 12:15, but the sense is more real life. *καὶ Λάζαρος ὁμοίως τὰ κακά* (and Lazarus likewise the bad things), with *ἀπέλαβες* understood *ὁμοίως* is best understood as corresponding to *ἐν τῇ ζωῇ σου* in the preceding clause.

νῦν δὲ ὅδε παρακαλεῖται (now he is being comforted here). *νῦν* goes with this and with the next clause and indicates the contrast with the life of Lazarus and the rich man before dying; *ὅδε* refers to the place where Abraham now is. *σὺ δὲ ὀδυνᾶσαι* (and you are in agony).

26 *πάσιν τούτοις μεταξύ ἡμῶν* (between us and you). The plural *ἡμῶν* shows that the reference is to the deceased rich man and those that are with him in Hades. *μεταξύ* is the same word used in Luke 11:51. *χάσμα μέγα ἐστήρικται* (a great chasm/gulf has been fixed). The perfect tense of *ἐστήρικται* points to a permanent and unchangeable situation of the chasm. ὅπως οἱ θέλοντες διαβῆναι ἐντεῦθεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς μὴ δύνωνται (in order that those who want to pass from here to you may not be able) final clause to indicate the intended result, semantically very close to a consecutive meaning. *διαβῆναι ὑμᾶς* is used here in the sense of 'the place where you are'.

27 *εἶπεν δε* (he said) indicates a change of subject matter. *δέ Ἐρωτῶ οὖν* (then I beg you). *οὖν* means (in that case). *ἵνα πέμψῃς αὐτὸν εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου* (that you send him

to my father's house), that is family, implying a restoring to life. *οἶκον τοῦ πατρός μου* refers to his brothers, as v. 28 shows, not to his father. Sending a messenger from the dead has a place in Greek literature. Nevertheless there is traceable practice of necromancy in the Jewish tradition, as well (for example the calling of Samuel from the dead in 1 Sam. 28:7-20). On the proposal of Lazarus to return from the dead, Bauckham argues that “the ancient world was familiar with a variety of methods by which the living might know what happens in the world of the dead. There was no view of the dead returning to the living.

In verse 28, the phrase *ἔχω γὰρ πέντε ἀδελφούς* (for I have five brothers), parenthetical clause explaining 'my father's house'. *ὅπως διαμαρτύρηται αὐτοῖς* (in order to warn them), final clause dependent upon premises. *διαμαρτύρηται* (to warn), or, (to testify), that is to inform fully preferably the former. Some suggest the ‘five brothers’ to be Sadducees who did not believe that there was any life after death, they simply thought that they were secure from any post-mortem penalties by reason of their descent from Abraham.

Verse 29 *ἔχουσιν Μωσέα καὶ τοὺς προφήτας* (they have Moses and the prophets), this may not mean Moses since Moses have died very long before the parable. Moses here implies that the five brothers have the written word of God which is read and expounded in the synagogue, compare Luke 4:16 ff; 16:16; 28:23. *ἀκουσάτωσαν αὐτῶν* (let them listen to them), presumably in the synagogue , implicitly means here 'to listen and obey'.

Verse 30, the request of the rich man to send Lazarus to his brothers depicts the rich man’s Jewish background, for it was common among the Jews to receive messages from the next world. Angels are known for bringing messages from the next world. Thus Abraham’s refusal

to the request to send Lazarus on an errand to the rich man's five brothers infers that the teachings of the Old Testament books are enough necessary tools for salvation.

30 *Οὐχί* (no) here means that they will not listen to Moses and the prophets. *ἀλλ' εἴν τις ἀπὸ νεκρῶν πορευθῆ πρός αὐτούς μετανοήσουσιν* (but if someone comes to them from the dead, they will repent) suggests that the send errand from the land of the dead will not make much different from how they will respond to the message of the prophets and probably the already written books of the Old Testament

31 *εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ* (but he (that is Abraham) said to him), change of subject. *οὐδὲ εἴν τις ἐκ νεκρῶν ἀναστῆ πεισθήσονται* (not even if someone rises from the dead), will they be convinced. *ἀνίστημι* occurs only here and Luke 24:46, in Luke together with *ἐκ νεκροῦν* and is synonymous with *εγείρωμαι ἐκ νεκροῦν*, compare Luke 9:7. *Πειτηῶ* (to persuade or to convince) suggest strong urging. Any one should rise from the dead is conformed to Christian language concerning resurrection though this assertion is not certain. 'They will not be convinced' depicts that those who reject God's word, words as contain in the law of Moses and words of the Prophets will not be moved by the testimony of such a messenger even from death's realm. It also has humanitarian and musicological dimensions.

4.8 The Message of the Parable/ Theological Reflection

The parable is not talking about the individual lives of rich man and Lazarus but two figures to represent two groups of the people that existed in the time of Jesus. Hock (1987) opines that "The parable, however, does not merely describe Lazarus and the rich man; it also takes a particular stance toward them and their social world, viewing their poverty and wealth in a specific way" (p.455). However, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus as Secombe (1983)

puts it is teaching about right use of possession. With such a detailed depiction, Jesus as Luke puts it is targeting a certain lifestyle for criticism and is emphasizing the striking contrast between the rich and the poor, a social structure that inflicts pains and suffering in the society. The parable, from the beginning, has the wide gap between the rich and the poor as its major concern and theme.

The parable makes no mention of the moral state of the two characters. Nowhere does it say that the rich man was evil and poor Lazarus was good, or that the rich was an impious unbeliever while Lazarus was a devout believer, however there moral state can be presumed from the parable. The rich man's failure lies in the fact that he did not properly use his wealth to alleviate the suffering of the poor. The haves' surplus property is meant to be shared with the have-nots.

The use of wealth is the major theme of Luke 16. Wealth can be a blessing or a curse, depending on whether it is used as a means to exercise power, a tool of self-indulgence or a resource to serve others. Wealth's danger is that it can turn our focus toward our own enjoyment, as Jesus emphasises in the parable of rich fool (12:13-21) and the rich man in our text (16:19-31). Money is a tool. It is an excellent resource when put to the right use. It can help to build many things of use to others. But to possess money is also to hold a sacred stewardship. Our resources are not to be privately held and consumed but are to be used as a means of generosity, as a way of showing care for our neighbour, as demonstrated in the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) and also during the a restoration of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) goes beyond the events of the present. The rich man faced the judgment of God when he died and Lazarus entered heaven when he died. This does not mean that poverty is a prerequisite to make heaven nor riches hell. The sin of the rich man was selfish use of wealth. He refused to treat Lazarus sore even though he has the resources to do so. Lazarus presumably was a righteous man irrespective of his poverty. He was pious not really because he was poor but as a person. The rich man on the other hand was not punished for being rich but for not using his riches to bless the poor around him. This is a lesson every rich Christian must learn. Rich Christians should not neglect the plight of the poor who need their helps.

Another message of the parable is unnecessary emphasis on status. The parable attacks the social strata that exist among the rich and poor and emphasis the danger of social gaps among the haves and have-nots. The rich men in the society are being referred to as successful people who have reached the top. For many, wealth is the essence of life. The problem is not that one acquires wealth after all, everybody needs money, the problem is their wealth accords power over the poor.

The rich man was highly placed in the society. Instead of using their wealth for the benefit of the society, in most cases they turn their wealth and position to dehumanize the poor. This is a lesson every rich and those who are highly positioned public office must also learn. They must use their position to help and protect the poor and the sick people around them. In this context, God does not judge the rich based on their personalities but on their relationship with other people, especially the poor.

Dehumanization of poor people in the Society is another ill which the parable stands to attack. The rich man allowed dogs to lick Lazarus' wounds. It would not have taken much from the rich man to take Lazarus to a hospital. History has it that rich people in Jesus' time have physicians as their slaves. Being that the man in this parable was rich, it is possible he even had a household physician yet he left Lazarus' wounds untreated. The rich and highly placed persons especially those who are Christians should give a human face to fellow human beings especially those who are having affinities with them in one way or the other. Jesus even mentioned that whatever we do to fellow humans is being done for God. Jesus admonishes his disciples that refusal to feed the thirsty and hungry who came to beg for food and water is a sin before God and it is capable of taking one to hell (Matt.25:34-46).

The parable brings into light the importance of care for the poor, the needy and less privilege in the society. Rich Christian must care for the less-privileged in the Church and Society. The contrast is set up from the opening of the account. The rich man is finely clothed and eats well. The dressing of fine linen and clothes of purple dye and his daily feasts inside his mansion with its own gate imply his wealth; the imagery of purple cloth here was used to describe flamboyant, very expensive dresses and splendour. Linen may allude to expensive undergarments; the two terms together suggest a "power dresser" (Fitzmyer, 1985). The rich man lives like a king (Prov. 31:22; 1 Maccabees 8:14; Gen 20:31). While some people eat heartily and can afford expensive underwear, others have nothing so Lazarus. He is very poor and probably crippled, since he lies down at the gate. If he is not crippled, he is very sick. He is looking for food. Even crumbs will do. His hope of sustenance is alms from the offerings of those who have something. His skin is a snack to lick for the wild dogs that roam the streets. Lazarus wears his poverty's pain on his ulcerated skin-a graphic contrast to the rich man's soft clothes.

The story is told in antithetical pattern, their opposing lives are clear: the rich man has a great life, while the poor man does not. The rich man throws away food; the poor man must scrounge for it. Some people have nothing, while others have expensive underwear. Observing this scene, it appears as if God has blessed the rich man and the poor man an object of God's judgment. This type of poverty following the Old Testament idea raises the notion that Lazarus must be lazy or sinful and as such paying for his depravity with his destitution. Deeper observation of the narrative shows that Lazarus was incapacitated by sickness and poverty. It means Lazarus cannot even work to earn money to feed for himself. We were not told if he had a family of his own and even if he had, he cannot take care of them. In this story Lazarus did not speak. His situation is so pathetic that no one would likely hear him if he had spoken. Here is dire need that the rich man could easily meet, even with leftovers. The rich man simply saw Lazarus as a no body and as such he did not care for him even though he had much. Jesus' teaching in this parable shows that God wants rich Christians to care for the less-privileged in the church and in the society at large. This is a challenge every rich Christian must not neglect. We should not be selfish with our wealth. We must learn to care for those who are poor.

The parable is eschatological, that is to say that a juxtaposition of the present and the afterlife gives the true picture of real life. Christians must look at life side by side with the consciousness of the present and eschatological aspects of life. People who rely on their earthly wealth are living in the shadows of real life. In as much as God wants us to be rich, He also wants us not to see wealth as the basis of life. The story in question exposes our values as it now considers Lazarus from an eternal perspective. Both the rich man and Lazarus answered the call of death without any regard to their status. Death is a leveller, for

both the rich and the poor. Each has a ticket for a permanent destination, one that money cannot buy. Money cannot guarantee one's status in the afterlife. Here, a remarkable reversal has taken place. Now Lazarus is in eternal banquet and the rich man is out of it to eternal damnation. This is known as an eschatological reversal. It is a true rags-to-riches story, only eternal destinies are the prize. Lazarus is by Abraham's side, while the rich man is in dire need of relief, living in torment. The mood of the periscope is set by the distance and difference between the two figures. Everything is reversed, and the changes are all very permanent.

In the eternal abode, Lazarus is next to Abraham, the figure of promise, sharing in blessing (Schwazer, 1974). This is another way to say that he has been "gathered to the fathers" (Gen 15:15; 47:30; Deut 31:16). The angels carried him to Abraham's side, to heaven, in one of the greatest funeral processions of all time. Here as elsewhere, Luke emphasizes the meaninglessness of the earthly social strata. One's social status on earth need not dictate one's spiritual status before God. On the other hand, the rich man's new address reads "Hades", which many translations term hell. A selfish life is a rootless life, for everything it yields withers and fades. Interestingly, however, the rich man still sees Lazarus as his pawn, his social inferior. Having learned nothing in his new situation, he begins trying to negotiate his way to relief. There is now no drop of water for him, just as there had been no food for Lazarus before. The measure by which the rich man had lived was now being measured to him. Irony abounds here. The wealthy man had not even acknowledged Lazarus in his earthly circumstances, but here he knows his name. Maybe he had seen the poor man all along and had ignored him. Lazarus had been good for nothing to him, only the object of a casual uncaring glance. God sees the potential of the poor very differently (James 2:5). Divine riches do not take notice of earthly wealth or social status. The rich man's chance to use his wealth

in a way that pleases God had passed. Now he is outside the gate of the mansion of eternal blessing.

Though many scholars deny the eschatological approach of the parable, but Cave (1969) attempt the interpretation of the parable in eschatological approach and says, “Jesus used the parable to warn Israel that in the final Judgment the distinction between Israel and Gentiles would disappear, and in the hour of the final judgment occurs the gathering in of Gentiles, Isaiah 2:2f; 56:6f; Mark 11:17; Matt 8:11” (p.324).

From the whole analysis, the second section shows the reversal of social conditions at death. The rich man found himself in torment while Lazarus was at Abraham’s bosom. A constant interaction between the rich man and Abraham shows that the story was told from the rich man’s angle, and Lazarus was the backdrop. Theologically, the parable shows Luke’s idea of the promised Kingdom, which was futuristic; yet, it is present. The rich man’s torment is a result of his life on earth. Those with the eye of the eschatological situation employ their possessions in acts of mercy and they will be richly rewarded both here and in the age to come. From the above, one can deduces the overlapping of Lucan themes on possessions.

In light of the worsening economic plight of the poor and being true to Scripture, the scope of any evangelism must be holistic, extending to care for the whole person and every type of need he has. The church must the lead.

CHAPTER FIVE

HERMEUNETICAL APPLICATION OF THE PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS (LUK.16.19-31) TO THE COMTEMPORARY NIGERIAN CONTEXT

This chapter seeks for the hermeneutical application of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus Luke 16.19-31 to Nigeria contemporary society. This involves the thorough study of Nigeria socio-economic situation and seeing how the discussions of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus Luke 16.19-31 fits into the issue of poverty alleviation and social interaction in Nigerian society. It will reappraise the government efforts and policies to eradicate poverty and how they ended. It will also explore the possible ways in which the parable will help offer moral solutions to the poverty issue and healthy social interaction; and how the Church should play a very significant role on the above issue. It also looks critically how the issue of possession, wealth and social strata create a big tension in Nigeria and seek to offer solution to them.

5.1 Nigerian Socio-Economic System and the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.

The socio-economic system in Nigeria is a replica of the social framework of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). Aigbokhan (2000) tends to x-ray the Nigerian socio-economic situation and affirms that there is a widening gulf between very few wealthy and numerous citizens living far below poverty level. That is to say that very few of the citizenry are extremely rich while the huge percentage live in abject poverty. Their wealth if equitably distributed will instantly render Nigeria a poverty-free nation, but unfortunately the majority of Nigerian families fall within the poverty line, while a very tiny percentage is starkly rich, (Maduagwu, 2000). This tiny percentage which are rich comprises mostly political and government officials: former military rulers, presidents, governors and their lieutenants, along with some younger people who have amassed wealth through various

means fair or foul, but unaccounted for. The young men and women who made it in life by fair means cannot be overlooked yet they have little or no concern for social welfare. The problem is not that they are rich, but they control the affairs or the destinies of the poor populace with little or no interest for the betterment of the poor and their social systems. The result as Nyrere (1987) affirms is “a few men (sic) living in great luxury, using the wealth produced by men (sic) for their own grandeur and to ensure their own power. At the same time masses of men, women and children are reduced to beggary, squalor, and to the humiliation or disease and soul-destroying insecurity which arises out of their enforced poverty” (p.36). Hence the problem is the gap with the rich and the poor.

If poverty is measured on the basis of nutritional standard, clothing and shelter, 80% of Nigerian households fall below the poverty line (Aigbokhan, 2000). This means that nearly 112million Nigerians live below poverty level. For Nigeria is to be classified as a poor nation is a paradox, paradox in the sense that Nigeria has been endowed with natural and human resources that is capable of making it a poverty-free nation. Ezeokafor (2018) has this to say “Nigeria has scientists, technicians, and professionals in different fields of study that meet world’s standards. Yet, there is little or nothing to show on the ground for it, in terms of translating these potentials into better quality of life for its citizens” (pg.2). Another great worry is the rise of poverty level in Nigeria. As years pass by, the level of poverty rises geometrically.

This economic shock results in a steady decline of the economy and increases the poverty level in Nigeria. This started in 1980s and Government policies in attempt to arrest the situation remain unproductive (Aigbokhan, 2000). The major problem is not that the greater percentage of the citizenry is poor but the widening gap between the poor and rich and the

complete disappearance of the middle class to bridge the gap. Though there are other socio-cultural and socio-religious factors that contribute to the poverty in Nigeria, the social inequality between the rich and poor is still a major factor. Other contributing factors are: corruption in socio-political and socio-economic systems: no accountability, transparency and responsibility- and the misappropriation of the public funds. The inability to find a lasting solution to these problems has instead helped to multiply and increase them that the rich are getting richer and poor getting poorer exponentially. The irony thing is that God has endowed Nigeria with natural and human potentials that if managed well, the issue of poverty could be resolved.

The few rich individuals enjoy their wealth and most times in the developed countries thereby enriching the so developed countries at the expense of the poor masses at home. They enjoy the best medical attention of the world with little or no concern for the welfare of the masses that voted them into their well cherished posts. The socio-economic systems keep on multiplying 'Lazarus of our time' (the poor) who are deprived of the necessities of life. This puts Nigeria into a sorry situation. There are records of unchecked abuses of political power, unchecked violence by security personnel, and unchecked corruption, official and unofficial. In the case of unchecked corruption, the poor are regularly forced to pay a premium for public goods and basic services, such as access to education, water, public transport, health-care, medicines and official information, that is to say that the poor pay for what the rich enjoy. In Anambra state for example, the so called Internally Generated Revenue Agency has the audacity to collect money on daily basis from very poor people (the hawkers, barrow pushers, ogada riders, and petty traders) who struggle for daily bread. The problem is not that the revenue is being generated for the development of the State but the judicious use of the money generated is in question. Is the money generated really channelled for the betterment

of the state and in making the state poverty free state? Those money collected end up enriching some of the officials of the said agency sitting comfortably in their offices.

The event that portrays similar abnormality is the burial of Chief Bennett Offor, the father of Chief Emeka Offor, a well-known prominent man in Oraifite who alleged buried the 88year father on Friday, November 18, 2016 in a pure gold casket worth of N15 million. The event took place in an extravagance show of wealth estimated to N500 million. This extravagant show of affluence was met with widespread condemnation of many Nigerians and many questioned the act, terming it to be wasteful. One of the commentators notes that it is copiously obvious that the deceased would have been much happier in his grave if this money was given as a revolving loan to some youths in that community. While he might have felt that he was honouring his late father by burying him in an expensive casket when the country is bewildered with economic recession is an issues of concern. Being the owner of Enugu Electricity Distribution Company (EEDC), it is not far from the truth that the money he is flying about is exploited from the poor masses who pay through their nose for power supply.

On another incident, the minster for Labour and employment, Dr Chris Ngige in 2018 reported that the federal Government has approved N1billion for the burial of the former vice president of Nigeria, Chief Dr Alex. Ekwueme in his home town Oko. Many Nigerians including the clerics and past political leaders questioned the reality of such amount of the said money. Dr. Chukwuemeka Ezeife, stated: "I do not doubt that the Federal Government may have spent such a huge amount but my worry is how much of it that may have entered private pockets. How much is the burial envelope and what are the plans for the burial? One could not understand how reasonable it is to budget such a huge amount of money for a mere

burial. The Anglican Bishop of Enugu Diocese, the Most Rev. Emmanuel Chukwuma had queried the claim as “unacceptable.” He said that the Federal Government should explain how the N1 billion was spent, stressing that the late Ekwueme, being a man of accountability, would not be happy with such an amount being spent at his death especially in the face of the infrastructural challenges in his South-east region. The above examples are practical examples of flamboyant and unnecessary spending going on in Nigeria. The poor populace seeing these wasteful expenditures would likely feel the same way the poor Lazarus felt.

In a nutshell, the socio-economic system in contemporary Nigeria society can be summed up thus: Though poverty is one of the major challenges facing Nigeria both past and present yet social interaction between the rich and the poor is nothing to write home about. Nigeria is a nation of a widening gulf between very few wealthy and numerous citizens living far below poverty level. As a matter of emphasises, the rich people in Nigeria as Ottuh (2014) enumerates are:

1. Those who own big companies but pay workers peanuts as salaries.
2. Those who are in the seat of political and economic powers but do not care about how the resources of the nation can be used in such a way that the poor can benefit.
3. Those who increase school fees indiscriminately thereby depriving the poor from attaining education.
4. Those who monopolize all businesses living no room for the poor to gain access to any meaningful business to better their lots.
5. Those who hijacked all enabling environment for business and academic leaving the poor at the periphery.

And the poor in Nigeria consists of the following, Ottuh (2014):

1. School drop outs due to incessant increment of school fees in government Universities which their parents or sponsors could not afford.
2. The unemployed who roam the street with his degree certificate.
3. The under-paid employee who generates huge amount of money for his employer yet under-paid.
4. The orphans, widows and widowers whose' benefactors left some resources for but such resources have been taken away from them by the highly placed in the family but cannot afford justice.
5. The retrenched and out of job persons who go hungry without any hope of one meal a day.
6. The lowly placed person who does not have any godfather at the top and thereby having no hope of gaining any access to resources that can better his lot.
7. The sick and physically challenged who struggle for survival through begging for alms.
8. The brilliant child of the poor parents whose child cannot gain access to scholarship to fulfill his academic and professional dreams.
9. The child who has become a street and high way vendor of commodities due to lack of free education.

The problem, as mentioned above, is not that few Nigerians are rich and numerous Nigerians poor, but the rich control the affairs or the destinies of the poor populace with little or no interest in the betterment of the poor. This type of social system and harsh economic climate hit the poor most that many of them loose their sense of self- worth and self-confidence. This is made manifest in the way the poor feel before the rich. Ezeokafor (2018) dirges that the way in which the poor adore the rich and the way in which the rich devalue the poor as they are no body in the society is worrisome. These categories of poor people are not really lazy,

they are trying to work hard to make ends meet yet they get it very difficult to get out of poverty due to lack of enabling environment. Many of such people suffer in the hand of the rich. The economy of Nigeria is so bad and worsen every year that many have lost hope in the system. The endemic corruption in the public service has left many without jobs, hungry and sick.

However, the south-east region of Nigeria otherwise, the Igboland is most affected hence the Igbo social worldview is very close to the Lukan society. Igbo traditional government is purely republicanism; characterized by the Igbo saying “Igbo enwe eze” (Igbo have no Kings). It is this philosophy that made Igbo very bold people; they don’t worship people but respect the elders which were the decision-makers on both sacred and secular matters. Without doubt, Christianity has done much in social reconstruction and development in contemporary Igbo society. The overwhelming majority of Igbo have been converted to Christianity since their contact with missionaries in 1857. Yet it is strange that until now the teachings of the church especially as it concerns the use of wealth and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) in particular is yet to sink deep into the lives of the Igbo people. If at all the Gospel has been preached, the researcher wonders whether the missionaries included the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in their messages. That is to say that until now there is still neglect of the poor in the society endowed with great wealth. The issue of poverty alleviation on the other hands has not being deeply inculcated in the life of the contemporary Christians in Igboland.

The south-east of Nigeria is the only zone in Nigeria that is regressing in the area of industrial and infrastructural facilities. The people in the area have resorted to survival by whatever means. The south-east which comprises the people of Igboland are suffering acutely in

various ways. As an indicator of the particular difficulty of the south-east is the fact that Abia state for example generates 150million Naira per month as internally generated revenue, while Lagos state government generates about 15billion a month as internally generated revenue (Akao, 2000). The five states in the south-east cannot generate what the Lagos state generates in a month. The IGR (Internally Generated Revenue) is an indicator of the level of commercial and economic activities in a zone. This reveals that there is not much economic and commercial activity going on in the south-east. What are common there are peasant trading and peasant farming. South-east is the only zone in Nigeria where non-indigenes hardly live nor establish commercial enterprise in their own fatherland. One could hardly see a meaningful non-Igbo living in the south east. Even the indigenes hardly invest there.

Yunus (2014), he maintains that the problem of the south east is self-inflicted. Yunus further asserts that the problems of the people are two folds: the first being what Nigeria did to the south-east and the second being what the south-east is doing to itself. Yunus first argument being that Nigeria government being the biggest actor in its economy and locomotive of economic development did not locate industries in the south-east. One can recall that at the end of the war in 1970, General Gowon launched an ambitious programme called the 3 Rs: Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reconciliation. Only the reconciliation aspect of the said programme succeeded. There was hardly any rehabilitation. At a time the government was building industries all over the country, it did not build in the south-east, which is why there was a time the phrase “marginalization” was very much in use as a result this non-inclusion of the south-easterners in the equitable distribution of federal resources. Unfortunately due to the under development of the south-eastern geopolitical zone, the dwellers had no choice than to migrate to other parts of the country in order to earn a decent living. The most successful Igbo are those who live outside Igboland and that are why Igbo people have become the most

migrant population in Nigeria. In Lagos for example, about 40 to 48 percent of the population are Igbo, which creates another problem and that problem is potential rift, potential conflict between settlers and the indigenes. The lesson of history is that any time the population of settlers begins to threaten that of the indigenes there is often a conflict.

The second part of the south-eastern problem which is what Igbo are doing to themselves was termed by Yunus (2014) as the lost decade. The Igbo are so relaxed owing the fact that federal allocations are sent to them and therefore term it 'National Cake'. Even the so called national cake are hardly seen where they are being spent. In most cases these allocations are seen in the national budgets and are not spent for what they are budgeted for. When Mbakwe was the governor of old Imo state, practically everything was built by Mbakwe with meagre resources generated from the state. The same is also applicable to other south-eastern states. Therefore, this highly dependent on federal government allocations rather than the people contributing to develop their region is the major reason the people has remained poor and irrelevant in the country. So the Igbo need to invest in rapid industrialization of the region. Many of the industries in Lagos and Otta can be replicated in the south-east to serve the east rather than carrying the finished goods from Lagos to Onitsha and Aba respectively. If a sea port is established at Onitsha for example, some of the south east wealth lost in Lagos will now remain in Onitsha.

Worst still, Awka North in Anambra State is one of the most deplorable places in the State and call for urgent intervention. Towns that make up the Awka North Local government are Awba-Ofemili, Ugbene, Ebenebe, Achalla, Urum, Amansea, Amanuke, Isu-Aniocha, Mgbakwu, and Ugbenu. Ebenebe, Ugbenu, Ugbene, and Awba-Ofemili are the mostly affected places in the area of under development. Ebenebe for example with a n estimated

population of 45,897 according to the 2006 Nigeria census is a link road to other interior towns aforementioned are bewildered with a number of socio-economic and socio-political problems ranging from poor road network, poor electricity, hospitals and other basic amenities.

Despite the fact that Ebenebe is about 25 kilometres from Awka, the state capital and with the climate and soil conditions that are favourable to farming, the people have remained in abject poverty due to the absence of good road network to transport these goods and for buyers to reach them from the cities. They are known as the highest producers of agricultural commodities ranging from cassava, plantain, rice and other basic farm produce.

Like every other agrarian communities, they have good markets to market their agricultural produce. Ebenebe community which is more central than other towns have a large, rudimentary open-air markets where many things including agricultural produce, food, clothes and cosmetics are sold but lack customers due to bad roads. The town has several daily markets in most of its eight villages. Nkwo Obuno (Market in Obuno village), Abaegwu (Market for Umuoye and Umuajana villages otherwise known as Egbeagu or Amagu Village), Mkpekere (Market situated at Ebenato or Eziakomadu otherwise refers to as Okpuno, Umuaba and Uwani villages). There are also Markets at Umuoguefi and Umuji villages with the largest market which is Oye market Ebenebe, named after one of the four market days in Igboland. The said Oye market is have two different locations. One of which is located adjacent St Joseph Catholic Church cemetery in Agbangwo (Umuoye village), the centre of the town. The other is situated opposite Obuno primary school (OPS), along Umuaba Ndiuno (a town in Eziagu Local Government Area of Enugu State).

On every market day, Oye attracts residents from the surrounding towns such as Ugbenu, Ugbene, Agbaja (also a community in Eziagu Local Government Area of Enugu State), Amansea, Achalla, Awba-Ofemili, Ugwuoba but hardly do they have patronage from Awka, Onitsha, Ogbete and other bigger cities in the area due to the poor road condition especially during the rainy season. Again on the poor pipe born water, the people have resorted to their numerous springs and rivers such as Ngwere-agbago, Omuzo, Omuzo Umuonicha, Omereze or Omereza, Nwangbala, Odede, Iyi Oku, Iyi Agbangwo, Ezu Odoli, Ezu Ajali and others and this have accounted for the poor health conditions like cholera and there is no standard government hospital built in the area. The major hospital in the area is in Ebenebe, the mobile hospital with a mobile unit which serves villages in the surrounding area. They also have Dike Medical centre and Ebenebe Health centre with non- functional Faith hospital at Awba – Ofemili (An Anglican Mission hospital). These and many more are the difficult challenges facing the people in the area which calls for an urgent attention. The research wonders why the gap between the area and Awka which is very close to the area.

5.2 Nigeria Social Strata and the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus

The issue of poverty has been a central problem in Nigeria since her independence. Observers have unanimously agreed that successive government interventions have failed to achieve the objectives for which they were established. The social stratum is a twin brother to poverty. In fact the later is the bane of almost every society in Nigeria and have more devastating effect. Ottuh (2014) stated this way

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is not really about money. It is about much more than the money in whatever denomination. This story can be seen as an apologetics against the dehumanization of the poor in the society. It also appeals against greed and the desire for self-indulgence. Jesus wants Christians to see the

great spiritual danger in that path. God's judgment against the rich man showed that worldly status does not matter in our dealing with one another rather humans should see fellow human as co-image of God (*Imago Dei*). Rich or poor does not matter but what we do to others with our status is what matters (p. 8).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus has much to say about the social strata in Nigerian social structure. The gap between the rich and the poor in Nigeria has been expanding in an alarming rate. This is made manifest by the type of walls the rich build in order to seclude themselves from the poor. The gate in the parable is symbolic and represents the attitude of the rich towards the poor. There was a time in this country, during which oil boom era, when the nation was so rich and the problem was how to spend the money. There was rapid infrastructural development, both the rich and poor lived happily among themselves. Later the whole story changed. The situation got worse when most politicians focused mainly on enriching themselves to the detriment of the people that elected them into their offices. They built vast empires for themselves and deprived the people of such basic amenities, like good roads, housing, water and electricity. The log in a wheel is not that they are rich but amass so much public wealth for themselves in such a careless attitude that they no more have pity for their fellow neighbour and sometimes close relations who are suffering.

This situation is mostly found among Africans especially Nigeria and among the Igbo people in particular. That is why many European leaders have said that there is something basically wrong with the black man. Okhomine (1963) described this act of rooting public money as madness. He further says, "why will somebody steal the money meant for road construction, building of schools, for building hospitals and sadly, such money they will not even finish in five generations.... it is therefore his view that political office holders in Nigeria should undergo psychiatric test for such unhealthy attitude to life" (p.68).

The paradox continues that our leaders can claim to be at the helm of affairs in a country where those who have been blessed by God with natural resources are deprived of enjoying the gift. Ijaw community in Gbaramatu kingdom, Delta state is a good example. A community that have over 26 oil wells yet they are living in thatched bamboo houses, no drinking water, no school, health centers and electricity as observed in the Nigeria observer Newspaper of 30th April 2017 as reported by Eubaldus Enahoro. The resultant effect of this situation is insecurity and unfortunately, it is the rich that complain most on insecurity. How can they sleep with their eyes closed when their homes are surrounded by poor masses?

The most unfortunate thing is that most of so called big men are either Christians or Muslims which are the most populated religions in Nigeria. Christianity and Islam alike have a long tradition of commending almsgiving, the practice of simple instinctive generosity to the poor. The two religions teach that we shall one day account for our stewardship, yet they live in such selfish, greed and ignorance of the poor at the gate, the same way the rich man in the parable did.

The rich men in the contemporary Nigerian society especially Igboland are like the one in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. They are being referred to as successful people who have reached the top. Some of them live in a penthouse. They display their self-importance and have-arrived syndrome. For many, wealth is the essence of life. It means self-sufficiency, independence and plenty of opportunity to enjoy material pleasures. Though few people attain such wealth, many strive for it. The rich men are highly placed in the society and some of them use their wealth and position to dehumanize the poor. This is a lesson every rich man in Nigeria especially those in public offices must learn on how to use their

position to help and protect the poor and the sick people around them. In this context, God does not judge the rich based on their personalities but on their relationship with other people, especially the poor.

5.3 Dehumanization of Poor People in the Nigerian Society is Inhuman

It is not that some are poor and others rich, is the problem in Igboland, the problem is the kind of social interaction that breed dehumanization of the poor by some of the rich men in the society. This can be seen in various ways as can be seen in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31). First in the parable under review is the issue of health. The rich man allowed dogs to lick Lazarus' wounds. And nothing is said about what happens to the rich man when he is sick. Uncountable numbers of Nigerians especially Igbos die annually on the ground of diseases and those affected most are the poor. The rich are frequently flown abroad for medical check-up without putting into consideration the poor who cannot afford the hospital bill in domestic hospitals how much more abroad. Chief Mrs Ebele Obiano, the wife of Anambra State Governor, through the Caring Family Initiative is doing a lot of reformatory activities among psychiatric patients and the homeless. This is commendable but the quantum of the challenges facing the poor is not what one person can handle. We have men and women who are rich in this country yet they are doing nothing for the alleviation of poverty in the land. It is not a surprise that the rich instead of proffering solutions to the hardship of the poor have kept exploiting the poor for their betterment. The workers in Nigeria for example are being poorly paid or remunerated either by the government and or the private sectors. Green (1985) evaluates this ugly situation thus: "it cost employers less and yet the economically desperate workers have little power to resist increased exploitation" (p.56). In most cases the poor are denied of their daily pay on the ground that their poverty has given them no power to oppose the rich and of cause no money

to sort their case in the court. Some rich people even refuse to pay their poor workers thereby reducing them to face untold hardship and as a result, they and their families have turned beggars overnight.

Another area of dehumanization is the area of food. The poor are always slaves to the rich especially when they are having one celebration or the other. This situation is so because the food is poorly distributed among the citizenry in a country endowed with food and other natural resources. What a paradox. As Ottuh (2014) puts it,

In the midst of much food, Lazarus was reduced to eat the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table if he was given the opportunity to enter the rich man's house. It was even possible that if he allowed he would have been allowed to drag the crump with the rich man's dog under the table. This is a pure picture of dehumanization and reckless abandonment of the poor in Nigeria. Even though the poor in Nigeria does not literally go under the table of the rich to eat crump but the way some rich and highly placed persons in the Nigerian society treat the poor and deprive them access to wealth is a typical picture of oppression and dehumanization (p. 34).

One of the major problems of Lazarus is food. As Lazarus was longing for crumbs that falls under the table, the same way majority of the poor people in Nigeria struggles to have their daily meal. Many developed countries have secured food for their subjects. Food being the most necessity of life is affordable to every common man in most developed countries, but that is not the case in Nigeria, Igboland in particular. Instead of the rich seeking for the way of protecting the poor from oppression by giving them access to basic necessities of life especially food, they use food and drink as means of lording it over the poor. It is also annoying that in a given community, a very few will have surplus and wasteful food and drinks while his neighbour will be dying of hunger.

Another area of dehumanization is area of remuneration of workers. Some rich people in Igboland hardly pay their poor workers thereby reducing them to face untold hardship and as a result, they and their families turn beggars overnight. This is wrong when they spend quality time working to and generate great wealth for their employers, instead of rewarding them, they would rather go home empty handed or peanuts at the end of the month. All of these constitute inhumanity to fellow humans. For example, consider the so –called private schools, many of the proprietors of those schools collect hundreds of thousands of Naira from students and pay their staffs peanuts at the end of the month as salary.

The parable from onset has made a clear impression about the life of the two figures involved. The rich man has a great life, while the poor man does not. The rich man throws away food; the poor man must scrounge for it. The above conditions are typical examples of what happens in Nigeria between the rich and the poor. Considering the above illustration, one would rather wonder whether poverty is a curse. It may even make one to question why it is so. Deeper observation of the parable showed that Lazarus was incapacitated by sickness and poverty. It means Lazarus cannot even work to earn money to feed for himself. The parable did not indicate whether he had a family of his own or not. In the story Lazarus did not speak. His situation is so pathetic that no one would likely hear him if he had spoken. This is what the poor generally suffer. They are hardly heard even in the midst of their suffering. Here is dire need that the rich man could easily meet, even with leftovers. The rich man simply saw Lazarus as a no body and as such he did not care for the poor man even he had much.

This type of situation is not farfetched in Nigeria as it is a common place to see some rich Christians feel offended when the poor come around them to beg for alms. Sometimes the poor receive demandable looks from the rich brethren instead of alms and looks of love. Jesus' teaching in this parable showed that God wants rich Christians to care for the less-privileged in the church and in the society at large. This is a challenge every rich Christian must not neglect in Nigeria. The rich should not be selfish with their wealth. We must learn to care for those who are poor in the family, church and the society at large. In caring for the poor, we must respect the dignity of the poor. Poverty does not reduce in any way our dignity as humans created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore the rich should not for any reason treat the poor with less respect, simply because they are poor. Ezeokafor (2018) in like manner asserts:

Indeed, while helping and caring for the poor, we must respect them and value them properly. To rob them of their personhood in the name of helping them makes a mess of our assistance and charity to them. Moreover, we should not make look as if they have no initiatives of their own, because of their condition. In caring, we must recognize them as free agents; help them to appreciate their lofty qualities and independence as much as possible. Our presence as helpers should uplift their spirits, offer them self-confidence, and reassure them of God's ever-abiding love for them (p.48).

The rich should help the poor simply because they are humans created by God in His image and likeness. This is the only condition that will spur the rich into action not in ego or selfishness.

5. 4 Poverty Alleviation and Nigerian Government Policies

Poverty is one of the most difficult challenges facing Nigeria today. This stresses how grievous this challenge pose to the nation and it seems that nothing tangible has been done to tackle this menace. However, many scholars have carried out researches on the poverty alleviation or poverty reduction in our contemporary society: Hussaini (2014) says “The fight against poverty has been a central plank of developmental planning in Nigeria since independence.” Napoleon (2010) “Poverty is a common problem that cannot be easily wiped out but can be alleviated through concerted effort by stake holders. The problem of poverty has brought about low standard of living of people in both rural and urban areas of the country. Observers have unanimously agreed that successive government’s interventions have failed to achieve the objectives for which they were established.

It is proved that majority of the population is considered to be living in poverty level. Evidences in Nigeria shows that the number of those in poverty has continued to increase. Ogwumike, (2001) for example avows that the number of those in poverty increased from 27% in 1980 to 46% in 1985 and to 67% in 1996; by 1999 it increased to more than 70%. Poverty cannot be removed but can be at least be alleviated. Consequently past and present Nigerian governments have attended to reduce poverty by attempting many poverty alleviation programmes aiming at restoring and reconstructing the economy. The high incidence of poverty in the country has made poverty alleviation strategies important policy options over the years with varying results. Poverty alleviation strategies ranging from Operation Feed the Nation of 1978, the Green Revolution of 1982, the Directorate of Foods Roads and Rural Infrastructures DFFRI, the National Directorate for Employment NDE, poverty alleviation programme, PAP up to the National Poverty Eradication Programme, NAPEP were all attempts made by various governments in the country to curb the menace.

Past and present governments have introduced many programmes for poverty alleviation, but eventually those programmes ended up in enriching those who initiated them. Some government benefactor programmes have been running for years yet; the programmes finally ended up with the initiators as millionaires leaving the poor populace in a sorry level of poverty. Such programmes are: National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFPP) 1972; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), 1976; Green Revolution Programme (GRP), 1979; Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure for rural development (DFRRI) and Better Life Programme (BLP) 1986; and Family Support Programme (FSP) 1993. Others are the National Directorate of employment (NDE), initiated and natured during 17 years of Major Gen. Babangida's regime, design and implement programmes to combat mass unemployment and articulate policies aimed at developing work programmes with labour intensive potentials. Unemployment is seen as the most issue that challenges the socio-political and economic potentials of the nation. Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP). FEAP existed for about two years (1998 – 2000). The Better Life for Rural Women heralded by Mrs. Mariam Babangida and Mrs. Mariam Sani Abacha's Family Support Programme (FSP). These programmes also tried to introduce a gender element into anti-poverty programmes, acting on the assumption that women needed special treatment in the light of their immense contributions to the national economy, both as small-scale entrepreneurs and home keepers. Other schemes poised to poverty alleviation include: Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), Rural Infrastructures Development Scheme (RIDS), Social Welfare Services Scheme (SOWESS) and Natural Resource Development and Conservation Scheme (NRDCS). Nonetheless, most of these poverty alleviation programmes suffered the same fate. They all failed due largely to the fact that: (1) They were mostly not designed to alleviate poverty 2. They lacked a clearly defined policy framework with proper guidelines

for poverty alleviation. 3. They suffered from polity instability, political interference, policy and macroeconomic dislocations. 4. They also lacked continuity.

Poverty alleviation programmes only appeared on the pages of newspapers, magazines and news conferences but fail to deliver (Maduagwu, 2000). All the alleviation programmes introduced by the past and even the present government ended up in gulping Billions of Naira; proved to be colossally wasteful and rendered the entire populace more miserable than they were Maduagwu (2000). For Nigeria to hope to be a poverty-free country, the leaders must have the eyes that see innumerable 'Lazaruses' (the poor) lying at the gate longing to be fed. There must be a complete change of attitude among the leaders: selfishness, greed and a wanton desire to amass wealth for future generations must never to be found among those considered for the country's leadership positions. Social and political development must go alongside economic development.

5.5 Private and Poverty Alleviation Public Benefactors

The contributions of a very few godly individuals and organizations to poverty alleviation in Nigeria cannot be ignored but unfortunately these contributions do not make a significant impression on the huge problem of poverty in Nigeria. Many individuals or organizational benefactors have contributed through building of roads, new factories, and farms. These can only make a significant impact on the lives of very few Nigerians.

Private sector more especially has an important role to play in creating economic growth, employment and purchasing options needed for significant poverty reduction in Nigeria. For example, agriculture and labour intensive activities are expected to provide employment and this should be focused on rural areas. The Government should collaborate with private sectors

to provide appropriate technology to reduce farms energy and time required for subsistence activities such as mechanized farming employment and fertilizer to improve agriculture.

The micro-credit and micro-finance firms for example can organise programme which will focus on savings, credit for micro enterprise, and the organizing home based workers through NGOs. In combination, these programmes would assist the poor men and women in the country to accumulate assets and expand ties within the community which in turn encourages investment in human capital and creates social capital. The impact is more dramatic for women and men in those traditional society, women and men are segregated socially, where women's mobility is severely limited, and where women's work is largely unremunerated.

In the develop countries like Bangladesh, Grameen Bank, and India, SEWA (Self Employ Women Association) have successfully applied micro credit programmes through which saving are prerequisite for credit which is utilized to start or improve tiny entrepreneurial activity from raising a goat to selling street foods to making fish. That SEWA has spear headed the rapid expansion of home net, a worldwide organization for home based workers which advocates for the extension of pensions, health benefits, and child care to these workers. Meetings of these promote the sharing of information on health, contraception, nutrition, and dealing with domestic violence as well as business techniques. Women learn the benefits of investing in the health and education of their children.

The NGOs can support and develop programmes by which the poor can obtain durable assets such as house or agricultural land programmes which can provide income and housing to women and men in rural areas. Development of small scale informal entrepreneurship in villages encourages the poor and destitute who cannot fund themselves. It provides

employment opportunities and greater economic growth. The employment opportunities would connect to the wider economy outside the village or community and increases the demand for existing entrepreneurs operating within the community.

Ezeokafor (2018) captures the interest of the researcher with his assertion for the plea to establishment and maintenance of structures for charity, he opines thus:

I have so often called on our philanthropists both private and public to start establishing foundations aimed at helping the poor, the sick and the aged. This practice is more entrenched in the West, where people devote certain percentages of their yearly earnings to charity purposes, especially the funding of foundations they establish to help the indigent members of their society or poor people of Africa and elsewhere. Many of such people provide for the poor in their wills through the Church. In those developed climes, such donations are usually deducted in the taxes to be paid by the donors. Our people should learn from this. Many of our people who spend millions of Naira to conduct funeral services of their deceased relatives can channel these resources to the creation of foundations in honour of the dead. Through it, many people could be helped to receive quality education and healthcare, establish business and be economically independent (p.52).

We have so many people who can comfortably engage on such and equally help to reduce the plight of the poor. This means that the fight for poverty in the land should be a collective one. The church, the Government, public and private sectors must all be involved.

It is important to bear in mind that it is perceptions as much as reality that is relevant for outcomes (Steward, 2005). It is therefore the perception of success and welfare of the poor

and less privileged in our society that should act as driving force and interest to help the poor and the needy.

5. 6 Use of Possession and Its Eschatological Implication

This parable offers the Nigerian Christians an opportunity to look at life side by side with the consciousness of the present and eschatological aspects of life. From the narrative the way the rich man lives and the type of clothes he wears depict that he has little or no conscious of the life after. He enjoys himself as all reward ends here on earth. This is typical of most Nigerian rich men. Many rich men rely on their earthly wealth as the basis of life. As Ottuh (2014) would have that people who rely on their early wealth are living in the shadows of real life. The truth they say is bitter and costly. The truth of life as portrays by the parable is that both the rich and the poor will one day answer the call of death without any regard for their status. Money cannot buy life and the quantum of money one have cannot determine the length of one's life. Money cannot guarantee one's status in the afterlife. The parable also reminds both the rich and the poor that life here is temporal while life after is permanent.

Here there is an eschatological reversal. The rich man in eternal damnation while Lazarus in eternal bliss. The rich man which was inside his mansion and enjoyed what life offered him ended outside the gate lying in great anguish and torment. Though the parable does not specifically identify the reason while the rich man finds his eternal destination in Hades nor any reason while Lazarus enjoys afterward, whether because the rich man was rich or Lazarus poor, the term used for torment as Ottuh says is *βασάνοις* was often used for the kind of punishment meted out for a slave to elicit a confession of wrongdoing as in Wisdom of Solomon 3.1-10, 4 Maccabees 13.15. The reversal continues that the rich was buried while the angels carried him to Abraham's side (to heaven) in one of the greatest funeral

processions of all time. Here as elsewhere, Luke emphasizes that sometimes the poor are headed for glory. One's social status on earth need not dictate one's spiritual status before God. On the other hand, the rich man's new address reads "Hades" as a result of the rich man's life of selfishness. A selfish life is a rootless life, for everything it yields withers and fades. Interestingly, however, the rich man still sees Lazarus as his pawn, his social inferior. Having learned nothing in his new situation, he begins trying to negotiate his way to relief. There is now no drop of water for him, just as there had been no food for Lazarus before. The measure by which the rich man had lived was now being measured to him. Irony abounds here. The wealthy man had not even acknowledged Lazarus in his earthly circumstances, but here he knows his name. This is a must for those who live like the rich man in the parable. The stone the builders rejected later became the chief corner stone. God sees the potential of the poor very differently (James 2:5). Divine riches do not take notice of earthly wealth or social status. The rich man's chance to use his wealth in a way that pleases God had passed. Now he is outside the gate of the mansion of eternal blessing.

5. 7 The Moral and Spiritual Solutions to the Poverty Alleviation-the Role of the Church

The past and present governments have propounded solutions to poverty through a variety of national policies which have been very good and straight forward but the problem is not the good policies but its successfulness. Consequently, the parable offers a moral as well as spiritual solution to the problem of poverty: the need is for the rich to be able to “see the conditions of those who suffer at gate and to see them as persons created in the image of God.” Since some of the poverty alleviation programmes have failed to actualize its purpose and essence, the hope of the nation for poverty eradication lies on the religious bodies. The final hope of the poor is the Church. But unfortunately the Church has failed in her role of

making moral contributions to societal development. The church on her part has failed to provide sound moral education; as a result, the condition instead of getting better has become worse. Again, the church has not done well in sharing the suffering of the poor by becoming their voice in the struggle against poverty and social injustice. Though the Church have attempted in providing some social services to the people through building of Schools, Hospitals, Motherless babies' homes, unfortunately all turned out to be more expensive than the ones owned by the government. Furthermore, the care for the sick, an inheritance from the missionaries, died a natural death. Davies (2008) in the audit report of Banner over Africa Troubles (BOAT) about 'Oji leprosy colony' gives a good illustration of this mess and the report reads thus:

This Particular colony houses approximately 250 adults and 75 children Roofs are leaking and many living units are derelict and unfit for use. Beds in the community wards are approximately 50years old, with 50 years old mattresses which remain without cover. Stigmatization and lack of understanding of the causes of leprosy is still very prominent, which means that people are afraid to be in contact with people with leprosy. The residents of this colony have not seen or had any input from a doctor or any kind of medical staff for several years. In addition the residents who seek medical attention have difficulty using public transport as they are not accepted in public areas (p.43).

Therefore is pertinent to assess the response of the Church to poverty alleviation in Nigeria. The poor, the sick, victims of injustice and other forms of oppression look to the church for succour. Adewale (2003) frowns that that the church has not meet with the challenges of poverty facing their congregation instead like rich they ignore their responsibility and look for a away to exploit them.

The research is not ignorant of the giant strides done by some churches in area of health delivery, education, and financial institutions like establishment of microfinance banks. These are commendable. Days have gone when the church is church turns their eyes to heaven rather than attend to the pains of millions (most of who ironically are members of their various churches). The church continues to build "gigantic structural edifices, colossal business empires and her clergy feed fat, while the laity is weeping" (pg.365). The church should know that purpose for establishing these institutions should not be monetary but for proper care for the indigents, thereby fulfilling the mandate given to the church by Jesus Christ.

Commenting on the above message, Okunoye (2013) calls on the church in Africa especially in Nigeria to awake to her responsibility. He concludes by saying that, there is need for a theology in Africa that will take into account the needs and aspirations of the poor people.

Abogunrin (1986), in likely manner states that:

The Church has led in giving the world schools and colleges, hospitals, orphanages, welfare centers, and progressive agricultural methods...But the situation in Africa... shows clearly that the Church has not done enough. Most churches do not have adequate programme for the poor masses... due to the fact that the vast majority of Christians in these areas are still living in abject poverty

Abogunrin (1986) further condemns the non-challant attitude of the affluent pastors and rich government officials to the poor and urge the church to participate in the sufferings of the poor, the persecuted, the oppressed, the retrenched workers, and the jobless, the displaced, the disinherited, the victimized, the broken-hearted, the homeless and the hungry Nigerians.

According to Olatunde (2006) “The degree of poverty in Nigeria is very high and government alone cannot manage it. It is a monumental mistake for anyone to think that government should unilaterally shoulder the responsibility of managing poverty in the country” (p.76). He commends the efforts of the government so far and he highlights some practical ways by which the church could help alleviate poverty. Some of these ways include: capital investment, professional assistance, addressing laziness, addressing corruption and sharing of resources. Therefore to overcome the poverty challenges, and its attendant effects in Nigeria, the church should be seriously involved along with the government and civil organizations. The effective and functional poverty alleviation programmes must be put in place.

Some other ways in which the church should look into in the cause of poverty alleviation are;

1. Food production: One of the major problems of Lazarus is food. The Lazarus was longing for crumbs that falls under the table. As a way of poverty alleviation, church should therefore be involved in provision of food for Nigerians.

Today, many Nigerians go out without food. They cannot satisfy their basic need of food. The issue here is not that of balanced diet, but food that can sustain the soul and prevent an individual from death that may arise from hunger. Many Nigerians are hungry and so they are angry and the Church should do something about it. It is sad that at the time of writing of this work, the cost of rice, the only stable food, in Nigeria has escalated so much that the poor would hardly afford for it. It is believed that a man’s attention could be secured having first ministered to his physical need(s). Thus, all the struggles and clamours for social justice and poverty free nation could only be achieved when food is provided for all. The Church in Nigeria should emulate their counterparts in Europe for food supply. Monasteries in the UK and America for example produce almost half of food and milk consume in those states.

Okunoye (2013) gave the ancient Israelite view of poverty. He presented some of their poverty alleviation programmes which are in line with God's command and injunctions on how the poor and needy in the society should be treated. It is necessary that the church and the government should copy and apply those procedures to make Nigeria a poverty free nation. These conditions as summarized in the work of Okunoye (2013) are stated below:

The gleaning principle: The law or principle of gleaning was an established method of preventing debilitating poverty among the people of God and refugees in the land. The rich is not allowed to collect all his farm produces, he must leave some for the poor (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19-22). Examples are the cases of Ruth and Naomi. If Nigerian rich people will apply this principle of purposely plan to leave some of their incomes for the welfare of the poor people in their midst, poverty would have been a bye-gone issue. The rich in Nigeria should stop thinking only about themselves and their rich counterparts. As in the Parable, they should think more of the poor who are languishing in hunger and pains at the gate- the neighbours.

The giving principle: This principle abhors being stingy but promotes the willingness to give to the poor. With this principle, those that have in Israel were encouraged to share with their fellow brothers that were poor and never to be stingy towards them. This principle is very scarce in Nigeria. They prefer making donation in churches and other public places than to giving to the poor. The rich in Nigeria should be willing to share what they have (Deut. 15:7- 8) and that alone can alleviate the challenges of poverty in Nigeria.

The Tithing Principle: the original aim of tithing was to help the poor. It has known and addressed as the tithing of charity and the poor. What we have today is a corruption of what

tithing ought to be. It is quite amazing that in most of our churches today, the poor widows, orphans, strangers and fatherless are never remembered in the distribution and expenditure of the church's tithes. In fact it is the poor that contribute their tithes from their hard earned income for the enrichment of the church leaders and development in most of the churches today. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus therefore calls for the adoption of this kind of tithe by the contemporary church to take care of the poor specifically. (Deut. 14.28-29; 26.12-15). If the contemporary Church should invest their tithe on charity and poor, poverty should have been a bye-gone issue.

Interest free loan to the poor: this principle is what that be term as interest-free revolving loan. That is lending money to the poor members of the congregation without charging any interest (Lev. 25.35-37; Exod. 22.5). There are other legislations in the Old Testament which show God's serious concern for the poor. Like daily payment of wages to a hired person (Deut. 23.14, 15; Lev. 19:13), collateral taken from the poor should be returned same day, no mistreatment of widows and orphans (Ex. 22.22-24), and so on. There was no question of doubt on the existence and the reality of the plight of the poor in the Old Testament, particularly during the mosaic period. Certainly, it was God's concern for the welfare of the poor that led to the institutionalizing of some basic laws in the mosaic legislation to protect their interest.

The parable offers the church a new perspective from which to see the Lazarus (the poor) and do something about their conditions. It also encourages the church to be actively involved in social justice on the side of the poor and unprivileged. The Law and prophets remind us of the connection between religion and economic development. The proper application of the message of the parable can accelerate the economic development of Nigeria.

5.8 Poverty Alleviation; and the Church

Some social commentators observe that “Poverty makes people compromise on moral values or abandon moral values completely. That is to say that poverty is a cause of corruption while corruption is a consequence of poverty and loss of moral values.” No wonder corruption goes across every sector in Nigeria.

In the socio-economic sector, the problems are legion: inflation and high cost of items, sale of adulterated drugs and goods, and lack of proper rule of law. These drive away the foreign business, hinder the domestic ones and consequently deter economic growth; gross abuse of public funds and diverting of money meant for the public into private pockets. Crime increases on a daily basis and money meant for development and poverty alleviation is diverted to maintaining the vigilante groups (locally made security enforcement groups) both in federal, state, local even town unions. Infrastructure which is meant to benefit the masses is in a terribly dilapidated state: Erratic power supply, inconsistent water supply, telephone, fuel. Poor roads and road transportation cost thousands of lives yearly. Railways are a thing of history and air transportation with very few planes serves only the wealthiest 1% of Nigerians. Others are; an inefficient civil service, inadequate primary health care, and a less than average educational system. Unfortunately, the voice of the Church is yet to be heard. In most cases the Church praises the government when it is clear that they are doing absolutely nothing for the betterment of their constituents. Physical, economic and social development must go hand in hand with moral development. The message of the parable is clear, the solution to Nigerian poverty and related problems is moral and spiritual and it lies on the hands of the Church. The Church should champion the revolt against corrupt socio-economic

systems, social polarization and social injustice. If many ordinary Christians in Nigeria would heed to the teachings of the parable, Nigeria would be a better place.

5.9 The Parable of the rich man and Eschatological Implication

The narrative is set in the situation that both the rich man and Lazarus faced eternal fate: the rich man faced the judgment of God while Lazarus entered into eternal bliss. This does not mean that poverty is a prerequisite to make heaven and wealth a sure ticket for eternal damnation. The sin of the rich man was selfish use of wealth. He refused to treat Lazarus sore even though he has the resources to do so. Lazarus was a righteous man irrespective of his poverty. The rich man was not punished for being rich but he was punished for not using his riches to bless the poor around him. This is a lesson every rich Christian must learn. Rich Christians should not neglect the plight of the poor who need their helps. Unfortunately many Nigerian rich men look down on the poor and deny them of love and care because the poor are not in the same pedigree with the rich.

5.10 The Parable and Eradication of poverty in Nigeria

To eradicate poverty completely in Nigeria might not be possible but to reduce or curtail poverty in Nigeria. The study recommends the following:

1. Education: the education system in Nigeria should be re-engineered to prepare students for real life outside the four walls of the school. It should be in such a way that with a secondary school certificate, one can survive and live unlike what happens when a secondary school leaver can hardly speak good English Nigeria's lingua franca. The government should spend more money on rehabilitating the horrible state of education in Nigerian public primary, secondary and tertiary institutions today.

2. **Skill Development:** Artisans and technical training should be enhanced. Training such as plumbing, masonry, block making, construction and electrical expertise should be taught professionally. To promote entrepreneurship. Government should deliberately promote entrepreneurship
3. **Stimulation of Economy:** the government should stimulate the economy through infrastructural developments like roads especially the roads in the rural areas that will aid the smooth transportation of their farm goods from rural areas to the cities. Developing amenities in the rural areas will encourage people to stay in the rural areas to farm and not rush to the cities to look for non-existent jobs. The government can develop rails and water transportation. This will create activities that will have ripple effect on the economy. Government can do better by supporting agriculture in terms of grants, loans, extension services, training and promotion of cooperative societies among farmers to upgrade their farming system.
4. **Diversification of Economy:** As it is now, Nigeria rely on just oil for her foreign exchange earnings. Nigeria is blessed with so many resources that she can be great in agriculture, mining, tourism, entertainment and sports. The potential in Nigeria is huge that is if only the government will deliberately focus on diversifying the economy.
5. **Making the fight for corruption real:** the major problem in Nigeria is corruption in high places and as well as the corruption of the people's moral and conscience as a nation. If the government can really fight corruption as she claims, those in positions of power and authority must decide on themselves to stop corruption, then the country will move forward and the resources of the nation will be judiciously used for the entire populace. When a senator will know that it is the poverty of the mind to own fifty houses in Abuja while people in his/her local government and constituency are

suffering. It is not when stealing fund meant to provide infrastructure and amenities but used for the purpose of which they were meant that they can convincingly say they are fighting corruption. The government can as well fight corruption when they are sincere, patriotic, and zealous and fellowship vigilance. The leadership of the country should put the people first in all policy decisions and build cottage industries to engage the unemployed youths. Let the government provide enabling environment for small scale business to thrive in the country. The government should stop paying lip service to her commitments. When the National Assembly passes a budget, the budget should be adhered to strictly.

6. Raising the National Minimum wages: since 2011, Nigerian's minimum wage remains eighteen thousand Naira Only (N18,000:00) and thank God for the negotiations between the Labour union and the federal/ State governments that have resulted in the minimum wage being upgraded to Thirty Thousand naira (N30,000.00). Even the increase can still not be able to meet with the inflation and purchasing power of Nigerians which was reduced after the recession era. The condition of workers across the nation is challenging and a time to time review of the minimum wage will empower the workers and increase their purchasing power.
7. Micro financing: Microfinance is the supply of loans, savings and other basic financial services to the poor. Using micro finance, people who are unemployed or who have a low income could get small loans to help them become self-sufficient. It is expected that the recent repositioning of micro finance banks in Nigeria, will increase access to finance particularly for rural cooperatives and groups across the country. This would also provide soft loans to arising working class dominated by a youthful population within the age bracket of 21-30. The central Bank of Nigeria and

other stakeholders should work assiduously to drive a robust financial inclusion plan in the country.

8. Coordinated social intervention programs: social intervention programs like current initiatives by the Federal government like the N-power, National Grown School Feeding Program and the Growth Economic Enhancement Program (GEEP), which is providing support and assistance to micro-traders is laudable. It is therefore important to have a sustainable supervision and coordination of the program. With proper coordination, programs could attract investments from private sector which will have a far-reaching impact on the wider Nigerians.

The use of wealth is the main topic in Luke 16. Wealth can be a blessing or a curse, depending on whether it is used as a means to exercise power, a tool of self-indulgence or a resource to serve others. Wealth's danger is that it can turn our focus toward our own enjoyment as the rich man showed in the parable under review Luke 16:19-31. Money is a tool. It is an excellent resource when put to the right use. It can help to build many things of use to others. But to possess money is also to hold a sacred stewardship. Our resources are not to be privately held and consumed but are to be used as a means of generosity, as a way of showing care for our neighbor (Evans, 2013). Money is a made for early use yet God is interested on how it is being used.

The text (Luke 16:19-31) unveiled to us some theological lesson that the church and the society must learn as to the issue of the poor people living around us. Such lessons showed that un-generosity towards the poor is a sin, status in God's view is immaterial when dealing with others, dehumanization of poor people in the society is inhuman, a rich Christian must care for the less-privileged in the Church and society, a juxtaposition of the present and the

afterlife gives the true picture of real life. When the church and the society especially the rich among us put these lessons into cognizance, their attitude towards the poor around them will change and as such they will give a more human face to the poor.

5. 11 Youth Empowerment Programme as Poverty Eradication Strategy

Youth empowerment is also identified as one of the major strategies to poverty eradication. The beneficial outcomes of this strategy are: improved social skills, improved behaviour, increase academic esteem and increased self-efficacy. Youth empowerment encourages young people to take charge of their lives. They do this by addressing their situation and then take in order to improve their access to resources and transform their consciousness through their beliefs, values and attitudes (Adewale, 2003). There are numerous models that youth empowerment programmes use that help youth achieve empowerment. These programmes can be through non-profit organizations, government organizations, schools and private organizations.

The study however advocates that if the Nigeria youths are empowered they can gain momentum to become viable and become institutionalized and in that way poverty would be reduced to the barest minimum. It is also believed that the process would create opportunities to learn, practice, and increase skills. It will also develop in them the confidence necessary to become productive and healthy adults. The study goes further to suggest the following interdependent dimensions of which this could be achieved:

1. Psychological empowerment: this enhances individual's consciousness, belief in self-efficiency, awareness and knowledge of problems and solutions to the problems. This dimension of youth empowerment would create self-confidence and give the Nigerian youth skills to acquire knowledge.

2. **Community empowerment:** This would be made possible when the leaders of various communities especially in Igboland would focus on enhancing and creating a network of support to mobilize their youths towards economic empowerment. This could be achieved through exposure to some entrepreneurial skills so as to be proactive both to themselves and their various communities instead of creating nuisance and state of insecurity to their neighbourhoods and consequently multiplying poverty in the society.

This study therefore calls upon the local, state and federal governments Of Nigeria, the Church and non-profit based organizations to provide programmes centred on youth empowerment. When the youths participate in established empowerment programmes, they see a variety of benefits. This is also one of the ways to apply the message of the parable to accelerate the plights of the poor in the country.

5.12 Vocational Education: A Tool for Poverty Alleviation in Nigeria

Technical and vocational education and training is another way and most effective human resource development strategies that Nigerian government, the Church and other non-government agencies should embrace so as to train and modernize the technical work force for industrialization and national development. Vocational education and training is an essential part of development for many nations to grow economically. Most Nigerian youths have, before now, been of the idea that traditional four-five year university degree is the only essential tool heeded for self-empowerment. That idea is gradually been addressed, as more and most post-secondary students and even graduates seek to embrace vocational education and skill acquisition as the key to deal with unemployment and unholy dependence on job.

Vocational education is an important part of education system in Australia, Germany, Leicester and Switzerland and one element of German model. In most developed countries, the government is often between the gap to support the vocational education in training institutions. In Nigeria, the case is been quite different for a while now. Vocational skill centres are poorly funded which has resulted in poor quality training facilities and trainers (except for privately run vocational schools). However, with the current reform in education sector, it is hoped that the federal government sustains its current interest on reviving vocational education. In the News from the national online-ng on 27th February, 2019, the federal government of Nigeria is said to have retracted long unkept commitment to providing vocational education through skill acquisition and development programmes. Such mindset towards vocational training only makes this form of education appear as a fall-back than a healthy choice, and does not encourage its acceptance nonetheless. Gone are the days when technical education should be regarded as reserve for drop-outs, low performing or financially deficient students. There are good numbers of people with vocational education earning a lot more than the four-five year degree holders and making a good career progress.

Therefore, in order for technical and vocational education to effectively contribute to industrialization, economic growth, wealth creation and poverty eradication in Nigeria; particularly in Igboland, wealth creation and skills training must be of high quality and competency-based and be made available mostly for poor and vulnerable members of the society as part of the poverty alleviation programmes. This is one of the major ways to solve the problems of this study.

5.13 Raising Human Capital Development for the Alleviation of Poverty in Nigeria

The term human capital was invented by economist, Theodore Schultz in the year 1960 to reflect the value of human capacities. He believed that human capital was like any other type of capital which could be invested through education, training and enhanced benefits that will lead to an improvement in the quality and level of production. Nigeria is blessed with a pool of human resources but has not been able to harness this great potential especially towards eradicating poverty in the country. Though there have been previous attempts that have failed to yield a positive result. This study however suggests that more effort should be made in this area but this time not the government alone. Other agencies including the Church should invest in human capital accumulation through education, training and skill development and social security schemes.

However, according to Schultz (2011) as cited by Adakoya (2012), it is crucial to develop the skills, expertise, and knowledge of people who are value creators. The inadequate access to employment opportunities for the poor is caused mainly by the stunted growth of economic activities or growth with labour saving devices. Individual cannot be gainfully employed because the number of unemployed has outgrown the number of companies in existence.

The government non-chalant attitude to both human and capital development in Nigeria has discouraged most small scale businesses in the country and this have added to the problem of unemployment in the country. Many rural regions in Nigeria have remained in their state of poverty for a very long period of time resulting from constant neglect from the government. These so called areas, popularly known as “villages” in the Nigeria context have been condemned by many as areas that are far from being rich. This have been the foundation of poverty in most part of the country especially the Igbo land and as a result, many rural

dwellers are bent on finding their ways into the urban centres making room for over population. The geographical location of some places, bad road network and communication problem have left the people living in those areas inaccessibility and unable to distribute their products for sales hence causing them into unavoidable hardship just to earn a living. As a result, many of the activities of the low-income family in their quest to survive and retaliate has led to the deterioration of the environment from distraction of the natural resource which has further translated into a dwindling state of the economy. This also has been the bases for the advent of many insurgence in Nigeria of which many of the insurgence groups are from the rural areas who are fighting for their rights and in the event have become oppositions of the government, and number have turned to terrorist groups. Some of them are: Boko-Haram insurgence, Niger- Delta militancy, Fulani herdsmen killings and so on. If the welfare and right of the masses are well protected, there will be little or no cause for chaos within the country.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter aims at giving the summary, conclusion, research findings and recommendation of the entire research work that has been done. That is to say that the chapter intends to give an overview of the whole work and a possible findings and recommendations for further investigations.

6.1 Summary

The research is on an Exegetical analysis of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31) in Nigeria context. The work was undertaken to carry out a detailed exegetical interpretation of the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31) as the reference point. The hermeneutic application of the text (Luke 16:19-31) to Nigeria context bring out different issues associated with the problem of poverty and social interaction between the haves and haves-not in contemporary Nigeria society.

The problem that attracted the interest in such research on how best to understand a big paradox in Nigeria: why poverty prevails in such a country that is endowed with great natural resources that if properly managed will make Nigeria a poverty free nation. The problem of poverty is fuelled with a social gap between the rich and the poor. It is sorry situation when one remembers that there was a time in this country during which there was oil boom. When the nation was so rich and the problem was how to spend the money, there was rapid infrastructural development and rich and poor lived happily among themselves. It is most unfortunately that most rich men especially the politicians focus mainly on enriching themselves to the detriment of the poor people, mostly those elected them into their offices. From on set, the research purposed that the proper hermeneutical application of the parable

will offer a moral and spiritual solution to the above problem. Hence the parable will encourage the right use of wealth and possession among the rich and hope and assurance of the transforming love of God among the poor.

The chapter two of the work is on the review of the existing literature on the topic. This chapter tries to recapitulate all the known discussion on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31) carried out down through the ages by many erudite scholars. The literature review as arranged under the headings; the conceptual framework, the theoretical frame work and empirical studies. In the conceptual frame work, the research seeks how thinkers intellectually try to understand the concepts: the poor and the rich. Poor has multidimensional approach. Jesus being a Jew took Hebrews concept of poverty and later the Greek terms were considered. Most of the scholars understood poverty as situation in which an individual is unable because of economic, social, political and psychological incapacitation to provide himself and family the barest basic necessities of life.

To some, the word is not economic deprivation but a situation of psychological and sociological terms. Social, as it regards the distribution of wealth among the criticism and consequences of social strata. This place the very small number of men who are rich on the top while a huge number of masses on the bottom line of social structure. From the pages of the gospel of Luke, we see and read the materials on possession, riches and poverty. The research scrutinized the issue of poverty and riches.

The chapter three of the research centers on the historical evaluation of the Gospel of Luke and the Nigerian economic situation. In this chapter, we commenced by critical survey of the arguments surrounding the authorship of the Gospel of Luke. The traditional authorship of

Luke attributed to Luke the physician is questioned. Though a lot of arguments are levelled against the authorship of Luke yet the evidences fall short of final proof and have no suitable alternative. Hence the research attributes the authorship to Luke. From there the research delved into the dating of the Gospel. It identified the three levels of argument concerning the dating. These sections are suggested by the scholars are 62-63 Ad, 75-85Ad, and early second century. After harmonizing the proofs that supports the above dates, the research agreed that the date might have likely to be mid-sixties.

The chapter three further considered the language as the mixture of classical Greek, Hebraic and Aramaic. The purpose of the writing of the gospel of Luke also forms the major work in chapter three. A universal gospel that tends to break down all barriers that keep people outside the boundary of the salvation brought through Jesus Christ. In Christ, God is establishing a kingdom that welcomes all men. The peculiarity of Luke favours that the Gospel is presented in such a way that favours the poor and those who's nature and condition have placed them at the periphery of the kingdom. The structure and content of the gospel of Luke favour the poor, and the recipients are mostly the poor though some New Testament scholars have debated over it. Construction of the social world of Lucan Greco-Roman world forms the major work in chapter three. The socio-political background was considered. The role of Jesus ministry in an already existing society made some to term Jesus and John as being antagonistic to the existing Government. The political, social and economic worlds of Luke Gospel are known for gaps and social strata mainly between the few elites and majority of the population fall within the poverty level. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16.19-31) evokes a realistic portrait of the above worlds. The bottom line is that the society in which Luke wrote was seriously under tension, tension in the sense that the greater percentage of the population live in poverty level. They rely on the mercies of the rich. The

parable of the rich man and Lazarus is told in the socio-economic, socio-political and socio-religious backgrounds as portrayed above. The Nigeria economic and social structure and social interaction formed the basis of comparative analysis between the Greco-Roman world and Nigerian society.

The chapter four of the research work discussed in details the exegetical interpretation of the parable. We started the interpretation by the orientation of the text, Luke 16.19-31. After which we delved into the examination of the setting of the parable and argue that the setting falls into the whole chapter that deals with wealth and possession. The text was given in Greek text and presentation of the text in English language, textual criticism of the text Luke 16.19-31. We also considered some linguistic analysis of the text. For the message of the parable, we gave some levels of interpretations as suggested by scholars. These levels of interpretations are Augustine's and Gregory's approaches of allegory. Another attempt to the interpretation of the parable is eschatological, the final judgment between the Israelites and the Gentiles represented in the parable by two figures: the rich man and Lazarus. The semantic analyses looked into the style, sentences and organization of the parable and admire the high and classical language, style and method in which the parable is presented.

Chapter five centered on the Hermeneutical application of the parable (Luke 16.19-31) to the contemporary Nigerian society. The message is applied to Nigerian contemporary society. Here the research acknowledges that poverty is among the major challenges confronting Africa and Nigeria in particular. The increasing incidence of poverty in Nigeria in spite various efforts used by a range of poverty-related programmes and schemes in the country is really an irony. It is paradox in the sense that Nigeria is endowed with great potentials that is capable of making it a poverty free nation yet a huge number of Nigerians live in poverty

level. The chapter also acknowledges a mad rush for wealth as an escape route to poverty and many ends up poorer and devastated. Many who labour to make it have no opportunity to do so, hence the wealth falls in the hands of very few Nigerians.

6.2 Conclusion

All we have gathered from this study confirms that the traditional teaching of the parable is the right attitude to wealth; concern for social justice and care for the poor, the needy and marginalized. The parable has significant connections with the ethical, theological and possessions discourses in Luke's Gospel. Though the eschatological theme is explicitly spelled out in the parable, yet the discourse is not certainly on afterlife. The primary teaching of the parable is about attitudes and actions concerning wealth and poverty. The social stratification which forms the framework of the parable shows Luke's deep concern for the socioeconomic systems of his community with its social polarization between the rich and the poor.

The parable has a prominent position in Luke's theology of possessions. The parable does not condemn wealth but vividly illustrates teachings about the difficulty of the total commitment of one's wealth which is a necessity for following Christ in his mission. The parable also illustrates how difficult it is for the rich to commit their money in the mission of Christ. It demonstrates that the parable emphasizes God's mercy to the poor and the marginalized; and warns the rich about proper use of money and the danger in neglecting the poor. It also shows that humans are accountable to God for their wealth and possessions with a reward/punishment motif underlying God's role as eschatological judge. The parable is uniquely and significantly tied to the universal salvation which is prominent in Luke's Gospel. The parable is emphatic about the teachings of the right use of possessions and care for the needy earlier introduced in the Magnificat (1:50-53), the Nazareth sermon (4:16-31) and the beatitudes (6:20-26). The parable of the unjust steward in 1-13 teaches about the positive use of wealth while the parable of the rich man and Lazarus

sharpens and reinforces it. The connecting section 14-18 with its emphasis on the ‘Law and Prophets’ demonstrates that though the breaking in of the Kingdom of God in Jesus transcends all the Laws and Prophets, the Old Testament teaching on care for the needy and marginalised and the right use of possessions is still relevant to the Kingdom which Jesus came to establish. The broader literary context of Luke’s travel narrative (9:51-48) elucidates the teachings and the meaning of the kingdom of God and its relationship with the right use of possessions as a demonstration of true discipleship. Discipleship is following Jesus on his way of his mission and following the way involves abandonment of one’s possessions.

6.3 Recommendations

The text (Luke 16:19-31) unveiled to us some theological lessons that the church and the society must learn as to the issue of the poor people living around us. Such lessons showed that ungenerosity towards the poor is a sin, status in God’s view is immaterial when dealing with others, dehumanization of poor people in the society is inhuman, a rich Christian must care for the less-privileged in the Church and society, a juxtaposition of the present and the afterlife gives the true picture of real life. When the church and the society especially the rich among us put these lessons into cognizance, their attitude towards the poor around them will change and as such they will give a more human face to the poor. We therefore recommend the following:

1. Rich people occupy many positions and are being recognized in the church today. It is therefore pertinent that they should be given an intensify biblical reorientation through Bible studies to help them know and see the value of wealth as the sum total of smiles put on the faces of the poor and needy in the church and the society.
2. The Church should intensify her caring ministry. A more viable charity ministry should be operated by the church to care for the immediate hunger of the poor before and during their empowerment process. For those who are irredeemably incapacitated, the church

should see it as a point of duty to feed them in case they are abandoned by their families. Some churches have opened what they term 'Food Bank', where food is made available for the indigent members. This should be intensified and encouraged.

3. The government should as a matter of all seriousness make policies that will check mate the ostentatious living and expenditure especially during ceremonies like burial and marriage which directly or indirectly push the poor into unnecessary expenditure in the name of meeting up with the social demand which has been established by the rich.
4. The government from the federal government to local should establish an agency or a ministry with the objective of executing poverty alleviation related programs in the country. This would guarantee that successive government does not discard their predecessors program, rather, add their own suggestion (still under the same umbrella) and all programs would run concurrently to ensure that all target audiences are reached. The agency should house all the poverty alleviation programs. Units/sections should be created to monitor each of the programs according to their peculiarity. By so doing, programs will be able to stand on the premise of the housing agency and as such, might not necessarily fizzle out with government of the day.
5. The rich and highly placed persons in the Nigerian society should abhor any action that will treat the poor with neglect and oppression.
6. Like in other developed countries, the Government should as a matter of necessity provide the basic human needs of the people at the affordable price. Electricity, roads, hospital, education and other need of life should be made affordable for both the rich and poor. The invention of mobile phone should be a lesson to Nigerians. You may recall that initially, the mobile phone was meant for the rich. Sim card alone cost at thirty six thousand Naira,

until now the price has been so reduced that the mobile phones are in the hands of everybody, both the rich and the poor.

7. The rich and highly placed persons in Nigeria especially those who are Christians should give a human face to fellow human beings especially those who are having affinities with them in one way or the other. It is an irony that one may be stinky rich while the brilliant child of his closest neighbour is a drop out because the parents cannot afford school fees.
8. The rich should not be selfish with our wealth. They ought to care for the less-privileged in the church and in the society at large. They should learn to care for those who are poor in the family, church and the society at large.
9. The church in collaboration with the Government should create more employment opportunities to the citizenries. In doing so those living in poverty line will be reduced.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher suggests that this work can be further researched under the following:

1. Exegetical analysis of poverty alleviation Texts in Pauline epistles, James, and Revelation.
2. Social strata and social class in Luke and its implication to Nigerian context

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