



An Exposition of Exodus 22:5 on Open Grazing Issue and Food Security: Lesson for the 21st Century Governance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper is basically written to fulfill an academic requirement. Nevertheless, it is hoped that it would go a long way to encourage more meaningful development efforts on issues relating to the effects of Fulani herdsmen-farmers crisis on open grazing in Nigeria. This paper is not intended to break an entire new ground, rather, it is undertaken in the premise that it will add to the existing literature in the area of humanities from the biblical perspectives. In addition this paper is very necessary especially at this point of Nigeria's development, when the crises between the farmers and Fulani herdsmen are becoming a threat to the economic development in Nigeria. This paper is expected to guide Nigeria government and all those whose livelihoods are affected to gain understanding of how Fulani herdsmen-farmers crisis can affect food security. However, the findings will also provide useful background for Nigeria government to adopt the method of Moses in handling grazing problem. The methods employed in this work are: Historical and analytical. The historical method helped to unravel biblical experience of herdsmen, while analytical method helped in analyzing facts gathered from the biblical perspectives to juxtapose the current experience of herdsmen in Nigeria. The paper recommended that, the Nigeria government should learn from the experience of the Bible as a yardstick to control the Fulani herdsmen in Nigeria.

Key Words: Grazing, Herdsmen, Farmers, Governance, Food Security etc.

INTRODUCTION

The *Fula* people also known as *Fulani* in *Hausa* language, are a mass population widely dispersed and culturally diverse in all of Africa, but most predominant in West Africa.¹ The Fulani's generally speak the Fula language. A significant number of them are nomadic in nature, herding cattle, goats and sheep across the vast dry grass lands of their environment, keeping isolate from the local farming communities, making them the world's largest pastoral nomadic group.² They are massively spread over many countries, and are found mainly in West Africa and northern parts of Central Africa, but also in Sudan and Egypt. The main Fulani sub-groups in Nigeria are: Fulbe Adamawa, Fulbe Mbororo, Fulbe Sokoto, Fulbe Gombe, and the Fulbe Borgu. Nigeria as a nation state is under a severe internal socio-economic and security threat. At a more general level, the threat has special economic, political and environmental dimensions. Each of these dimensions has greatly affected the nation's stability and can be traced to the Fulani-herdsmen and farmers clash, ethnic militant armies, ethnic and religious conflicts, poverty, insurgency, armed robbery, corruption, economic sabotage and environmental degradation.³

Violent conflict and crisis in Nigeria, like other parts of the world, have created a rift in human relations, caused serious threat to food security, among many other effects.



Crisis is inevitable as long as we live together, especially in a multi-ethnic, cultural and religious community like Nigeria. However violence leaves us with various forms of retardation and underdevelopment resulting from the destruction of lives, farmland and property. The menaces of violent crisis conflict have been on the increase in some most Nigerian cities in the last two decades.⁴ Most of these conflicts are generally regarded as ethno-religious bigotry and antagonism.

The conflicts in most part of Nigeria especially the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash are largely uncalled for. Farmers can no longer farm peacefully because of Fulani herdsmen. These Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash have pitched Christians and Muslims against each other. The conflict has had devastating effects on inter-group relationships especially in Nasarawa Egor in Nasarawa State and Agatu L.G.A of Benue State. Apart from the loss of lives, farmlands, food produce and property, it has profound influence on residential relationships, leading to new trends in the polarization of communities. This is evident in a physical manifestation of mono religious areas in Nasarawa and Benue States, with Christians and Muslims living in dominant religious clusters.⁵

Moreover, serious conflict erupt between Fulani herdsmen and farmers leading to loss of lives, valuable properties and destruction of vast expanse of arable agricultural farmlands thereby posing serious threat to food security since farmers for fear of attack could no longer go to farm and harvest their farm produce. The recent attacks by Fulani herdsmen is on the increase, with the most recent attacks in June 2016 occurring in Ossissa community in Ndokwa East and Niger community in Ethiope East Local Government Areas of Delta State and three more communities (Ugondo, Turan, Gabo Nenzev) in Logo Local Government Area, Benue State, total killings involving no fewer than 60 persons. The Federal Government recently ordered an inquiry, military crackdown on the group and affirmed its plans to establish cattle ranches as a solution to the frequent clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria. In recent times, the killings recorded by Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash has rampaged most communities displacing them of their farmlands and loss of their major source of livelihood. This is becoming unbearable with the Fulani herdsmen always having their ways leaving the farmers at their mercy. Farmers now go to farm armed with weapons for defense in case of attack.⁶

Recently, several deaths and casualties have been recorded in series of clash between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. Most people attribute the clash between Fulani Herdsmen and Farmers to religious differences between the Muslims or Islam's and the Christians. Several farmlands have been destroyed due to conflict erupting between farmers and herdsmen. Herdsmen attribute the roots of the crisis to religious differences resulting in the killing of their cows while the farmers see the herdsmen as a threat to their crops and agricultural produce since the herdsmen allow their cows to feed on the farmer crops.⁷ Evidences have shown that herdsmen and farmers clash in several parts of Nigeria. This could be due to differences in religious background between the herdsmen and farmers. Several lives and farmlands been destroyed in this crisis. Recently, in Niger Fulani herdsmen attacked farmers at the farm and claimed one life which prompted the indigenes of Niger to riot. It was due to this saga that the Ovie of Niger Kingdom



(HRM Akpomedaye Majoroh II) declared state of emergency on the 23rd of April, 2017 on the Fulani herdsmen and farmers clash in a bid to restore peace to the community.⁸ It is against this background that this study is conducted to investigate the effects of Fulani herdsmen-farmers crisis on food security in Nigeria and to juxtapose the findings with the biblical principles for cattle rearing.

Fulani Herdsmen Vs Farmers on open grazing is a new threat to economic stability. The growing activities of some rampaging Fulani herdsmen in some parts of the country, particularly in the North Central Nigeria's region of Plateau, Benue, Taraba and Nasarawa states, could pose potential threat to sectors' development, including agriculture, mining, and industries, among others. If not nipped in the bud, the nation's economy could witness another long-drawn shock that may be worse than the recession the country just exited. Indeed, dark clouds again shroud Nigeria's once predictable and certain future with an uprising in the Fulani herdsmen's menace. Although clashes between Fulani herdsmen and farmers have been on-going for decades, especially in the northern parts of the country, the nationwide spread of the herdsmen to other regions other than the north in recent times is as a result of unfavourable weather patterns which have resulted in acute water scarcity and droughts in a few northern states, tsetse-fly infestation, dry pastures/grass and leaching. Searching for suitable pastures and water for their cattle, herdsmen, usually, but not solely of the Fulani stock, from the far northern parts of the country move their herds, mostly on foot, through different states across the country often stopping at designated points to drop off some of their stock at cattle markets, to fulfill the beef supply needs of local consumers.⁹

The nomadic pastoral herdsmen while moving their livestock en masse, from location to location, in search of grazing pasture, often move into local communities or farms along the way, and their cattle trampling on, and eat up crops and grass, destroying the livelihood of farm owners in the process, thereby creating a friction that has resulted to reported cases of clashes and violence. A report from market intelligence and communications consulting firm, SBM Intelligence indicates that an escalation in the number of attacks by herdsmen has been recorded from the early days of December 2017. The Miyetti Allah Cattle Breeders Association supplied the intelligence firm with a list of 52 persons killed at Kikan, Kwadomti and Shefaran villages of Numan L.G.A. on Tuesday, 21st November, 2017, a date prior to the escalated attacks. Benue communities were reported to have been brutally attacked on New Year's Day by suspected Fulani herdsmen after they invaded parts of the Guma and Logo local government areas of the state.¹⁰

The attacks, which spilled over to Tuesday, 2nd January, came on the heels of the implementation of the anti-open grazing law, which the Fulani herdsmen considered detrimental to their means of livelihood. Following the rising spate of attacks, a number of states including Ekiti, Benue and Taraba, passed anti-grazing laws as a measure to curb these pastoral clashes, but their suggested punitive measures have been largely ineffective, except in Ekiti, where the measures have at least seen attacks go to nearly zero. Nigerians have however condemned the Federal Government's parochial reaction to control the looming disaster. Many Nigerians have called for justice and the proscription of the Fulani herdsmen.¹¹ President Muhammadu Buhari has so far ordered the Inspector



General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, to relocate to Benue State to quell the festering killings by herdsmen in Guma and Logo local government areas in Benue State, and a handful of arrest have been made, but at the cost of properties and precious lives, military and police men's lives inclusive. Many communities however believe that they are left with little choice than to resort to self-help as the proliferation, and spread of these incidents is yet to abate. The economic impact of the strife is multi-faceted. First, the cattle industry is underperforming. It contributed 1.58 percent to Nigeria's GDP as at Q3 2017, as against crop production that contributed 22.19 per cent. Maybe, if farmers knew some of their produce could be traded with the herdsmen for acceptable payment, there would be the incentive to provide quality feeds to the herders' cattle, improving the meat and milk yields.¹²

However, because violence, and not commerce is the means of exchange, the farmers are more incentivised to even poison crops they know the cattle will feed on, destroying value for both the farmers and the herders alike. In an economy in need of diversification, ramping up national agricultural production will necessarily require a resolution to this conflict. A second level of this is the fact that the violence decimates communities that would have been potential markets for the herders. Many communities in the affected regions have emptied out, creating a refugee situation that has increased the strain on government coffers. Coupled with refugees from the Boko Haram crisis, and the newly developing displacements from the English speaking regions of Cameroon, Nigeria stands the risk of having even elevated numbers of displaced people within its borders. Apart from the security risk this portends, the impact on funding for such agencies as NEMA, NAAPTIP and their state equivalents is significant. Perhaps an even bigger threat is to Nigeria's food security. 25 per cent of Nigeria's population has been pegged by the Food and Agricultural Organisation, FAO as severely insecure in their September 2017 report. Cattle is a source of beef and the security threatens the ability to get them to their markets in the south. Most of the communities in the Middle-Belt where the attacks have taken place are in the much vaunted 'food basket' of the country.¹³

The Middle-Belt has traditionally been one of Nigeria's most agriculturally productive regions. Crops such as yam, cassava, rice, soy beans and guinea corn, amongst others which are grown in the rich soils hold the key to Nigeria's quest for self-sustainability in food production. It will therefore not be an exaggeration to note that the current pastoral conflict raging across key Middle-Belt states probably has more economic implications to the country than the conflict in North Eastern Nigeria. Many have not planted or harvested for as much as seven years since 2011 due to the ongoing violence. A lot of the produce from the north that goes to the densely populated south such as pepper, tomatoes and grains pass through this region as well.¹⁴ As more and more communities abandon farming and take up arms, the impact on supply of these foods and meat to the south will reflect even more on the price and food inflation will continue to rise. Socially, an effect will also be that youths used to getting their sustenance through violence take a longer time to return to being productive, creating a situation where there are able bodied youths unable to work because they lack the core skills that would be normally incidental to their livelihood. Furthermore, as numerous farming communities have been displaced, unemployment which was already an issue has escalated along with declining food



production. The Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations estimates that the number of food insecure people in Nigeria stood at about 11 million as at August 2017, with the number projected to increase in the short term. This scenario holds worrying implications on economic, social and security-related fronts. The Minister of State for Agriculture and Rural Development, Heineken Lokpobiri, stated in 2016 that Nigeria spends about ₦6.6 trillion a year on food importation, an amount which dwarfed the 2016 national budget of ₦6.06 trillion. With the current efforts to improve the country's food production and reduce the import bill, perhaps the most important measure is being overlooked, which is getting Middle-Belt farmers back to work. Other countries have disarmed groups in the past, and it is time for Nigeria to do so, and also to take really seriously, the challenge of climate change which is squeezing various groups into limited land. Nigeria's green wall project appears to have stalled. Waiting until the herdsmen are capable of taking on entire military formations like Boko Haram have been doing, or worse, until other groups get their own access to military grade weapons, is not a solution.¹⁵

History of Grazing Reserves in Nigeria

Grazing reserves in Nigeria started during the pre-colonial era. Although formally introduced by the British, grazing reserves were demarcated by the Fulani who conquered and ruled Northern Nigeria. The attempt by the British in 1940 to separate the grazing land from the farm land, however, faltered because the Europeans imposed land use controls divorced from economic and demographic dynamics in the pastoral system. Formal grazing reserves in Nigeria started accidentally in the 1950s when Hamisu Kano, working with pastoralists on livestock vaccination, foresaw the shortages of grazing land in Northern Nigeria.¹⁶ Supported by the government, he initiated the grazing reserve scheme from the abandoned government resettlement schemes (Fulani Settlement Scheme). The resettlement schemes collapsed because the government had neither the financial nor the managerial ability to continue with the financially burdensome scheme, and the best alternative use of the land, the government thought, was to convert it into grazing reserves that were less financially committed. Grazing reserve hatched in 1954 after a study of the Fulani production system contained in the "Fulani Amenities Proposal." The proposal suggested the creation of grazing reserves, the improvement of Fulani welfare, and the transformation of the herd management system. By 1964, the government had gazetted about 6.4 million hectares of the forest reserve, ninety-eight percent in the savanna. Sokoto Province had twenty-one percent of the land, followed by Kabba, Bauchi, Zaria, Ilorin, and Katsina, with 11-15 percent each. The Wase, Zamfara, and Udubo reserves followed in succession.¹⁷

In 1965, the Northern Nigerian Government incorporated the Fulani Amenities Proposal into the Grazing Reserve Law. Before the enactment of the Grazing Reserve Law of the Northern Nigeria, the pastoral Fulani relied on the goodwill of the farmers, who conferred upon themselves the lordliness of occupied and unoccupied land. Because interpersonal and kinship affiliations governed the dispensation of land, the Fulani worried about being evicted from the land when their relationship with the hosts become strained. The planners, however, applied a top-down approach that excluded the Fulani



from formulating and implementing this well-intentioned program. Accordingly, the Fulani gave less than the expected cooperation in the scheme. In 1976, the Survey Department finished the survey for most of the land earmarked for grazing. The United States Agency for International Development gave the technical assistance. By 1980, Nigeria had established 2.3 million hectares of grazing reserves, although this figure represented only eleven percent of the planned size. The government acquired less than five percent of the ten million hectares proposed as grazing land. Of the forty-five planned dams, twenty-four have been completed. Five boreholes have been sunk. Of the expected 722 roads, 150 have been built, showing a huge deficit.¹⁸

At the close of 1992, the government has identified over 300 areas with twenty-eight million hectares for grazing reserve development. About forty-five of these areas, covering some 600,000 hectares, have been gazetted. Eight of these reserves, totaling 225,000 hectares, are fully established. Already, 350 of the projected 950 pastoral families and 11,600 of the planned 46,000 cattle are using these reserves (N.L.P.D. record 1992). Apart from acquiring the land, the government regulates how the Fulani should use the grazing reserves. The Land Use Decree which seeks to remove the impediments to infrastructure provision actually adds to the problems of rural transformation in Nigeria. Although, in principle, the decree guarantees the pastoral Fulani rights to unbounded grazing parks, in reality it accentuates the demise of traditional pastoralism by augmenting the security of tenure among contiguous users with better access to open land.¹⁹

The Concept of Grazing Reserve: A grazing reserve is a piece of land that the government acquires, develops, and releases to the pastoral Fulani. The state and the local governments have gazetted and obtained grazing land varying from fifty to one hundred hectares. The federal government shoulders seventy percent of the burden of developing the grazing reserves, the state governments shoulder twenty percent, and the local government carry ten percent.²⁰ The *Hurumi* system is intended to encourage investment in the land and to ensure that the land is conserved. Controlled grazing that limits the number of animals entering a grazing land, leads to efficient rangeland management. Under the *Hurumi* system, the government gives each settler on the reserve a piece of land. Depending on the herd size and the carrying capacity of the land, the settler pays an annual rent to the government. In the rainy-season the reserve opens to the animals. The reserve closes in the dry-season, when animals must go on sojourn pasture. Pastoralist must also adjust to the seasonal and spatial tenurial arrangements.

During severe shortages of feed, the government opens the communal grazing areas to the distressed herds. Livestock owners must apply to the Project Office for a grazing permit. The pastoralists must also agree to follow the government's guidelines for stocking rate. The ten hectares per herding unit is apportioned as follows: four hectares for grazing, two for settlement, two for farming of legumes, and two for fallow.²¹

Aims of the Grazing Reserves: The aims of grazing reserves include getting and protecting pasture-space for the national herds, and removing discord between agronomists and pastoralists living in the same geographic area. By separating the



herders from the cultivators, the government hopes to foster peaceful coexistence between them by making the grazing reserve a zone of no-conflict. Improving land use and herd management, providing social welfare amenities to the Fulani, and increasing national income are pivotal in grazing reserve development in Nigeria. The government hopes the grazing reserves will become the center of agro-pastoral innovations, a guarantor of land security, a nucleus for nomadic Fulani settlement, a precinct for crop/livestock systems integration, and a place for small-scale rather than holder-oriented production. Some of the gains from the grazing reserves as easing seasonal migration, improving the quality of herds, multiplying outlet for bovine product, and enhancing access to extension and social services. The grazing reserve also encourages the uniform deployment of the cattle.²²

The Implications of Land Use Act on Pastoral Fulani: Cattle rearing is a private business in which individuals make billion of naira with little or no record of taxes. Rewarding the herders with public funds to build ranches would only mean that they have killed enough to beat the country into pacification mode. And this can only encourage other people to arm themselves, cause sufficient killings to get undue concession. What would our society become of fishermen farmers and people in other trades begin to cause bloodbath so that the Federal Government could give them special consideration?

The *Hurumi* system lacks the legal statute to stop farmers from alienating the grazing land. The ease with which these farmers take over the land makes the *Hurumi* an endangered treasure of the Fulani. Lack of formally gazetted land, implying lack of tenurial security, prevents investment in land and discourages settlement on the reserves.²³

The herdsmen have aggressive means of accessing the land, stay permanent on the land, establish recency on occupied land, or show intent for uninterrupted use of the land, farmers have greater advantage of securing land than the mobile pastoralists. The Fulani understanding of land possession differs from the legal or bureaucratic definitions of ownership. Ownership among the Fulani means the *de facto* possession or the occupation of uncontested and unchallenged land (although absolutism or *de jure* ownership of land is becoming prevalent among the Fulani, particularly those living near major settlements). The Fulani man who clears a parcel of land and builds his hut on it may claim rights of that piece of land if nobody else objects. When the Fulani man leaves the area, he relinquishes the claim for that land. In other words, property rights are temporary, circumstantial, and require no formalities such as having title deeds of witnesses other than physical presence. In their claims for land, the Fulani respect and uphold the principles of first-come-first-serve.

Individualize ownership of land around the homestead is not a serious land issue in Nigeria. For grazing reserve development, however, individual claims give way to collective claims. These claims are major concern because the land is extensive, boundless, and being used by pastoralists as well as non-pastoralists. The abrogation of traditional access to grazing territory by the Land Use Decree underscores the sociopolitical disruption in traditional pastoralism. The disruption increases rather than decreases land claims by non-pastoral users. Although the Land Use Act has abolished private



possession of land, in practice, ownership is the rule rather than the exception, and "...traditional tenure system is still *de facto* if not *de jure* viable."²⁴

Food Security: This exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Household food security is the application of this concept to the family level, with individuals within households as the focus of concern. While Food insecurity exists when people do not have adequate physical, social or economic access to food as defined above. Sub-nutrition, often assumed in official literature to be synonymous with the more emotive term hunger, is the result of food intake that is continuously insufficient to meet dietary energy requirements. Food security is a condition related to the supply of food, and individuals' access to it. Concerns over food security have existed throughout history.²⁵ There is evidence of granaries being in use over 10,000 years ago, with central authorities in civilizations including ancient china and ancient egypt being known to release food from storage in times of famine. At the 1974 world food confrence the term "food security" was defined with an emphasis on supply. Food security, they said, is the "availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices" (United Nations, 2013). Later definitions added demand and access issues to the definition. The final report of the 1996 World Food Summit states that food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."²⁶

Household food security exists when all members, at all times, have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Individuals who are food secure do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. Food insecurity, on the other hand, is a situation of "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways", according to the united state department of agriculture. Food security incorporates a measure of resilience to future disruption or unavailability of critical food supply due to various risk factors including droughts, shipping disruptions, fuel shortages, economic instability, and wars. In the years 2011-2017, an estimated 842 million people were suffering from chronic hunger. The food and agriculture organisation of the United Nations, or FAO, identified the four pillars of food security as availability, access, utilization, and stability. The United Nations (UN) recognized the right to food in the Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and has since noted that it is vital for the enjoyment of all other rights.²⁷

Measurement is typically indirect and based on food balance sheets and national income distribution and consumer expenditure data. Linking hunger and sub-nutrition with inadequate food intake allows the measurement of food insecurity in terms of the availability and apparent consumption of staple foods or energy intake. This type of measurement corresponds to the earlier narrower definitions of chronic food insecurity. Where international cross-sectional and national time series comparisons are undertaken, as in SOFI 2001, national estimates are based on average per capita availability of staple foods, or apparent consumption. The estimates may also be weighted by evidence of food



expenditure by income categories for countries where consumer expenditure surveys are not available. Because poverty lines, such as those calculated by the World Bank, also reflect assumptions about dietary energy intake, there is inevitably a high degree of correlation in these cases with estimates of poverty and extreme poverty.²⁸

The international comparison of country estimates of chronic food insecurity therefore reflect cross-sectional patterns and trends in food production, supplemented by what is recorded about trade in basic foodstuffs (effectively cereals) as incorporated into national food balance sheets. These comparisons show broad differences in food security between the development categories of low, middle and upper income countries, as well as considerable variance within categories.

The Position of the Bible on open grazing land

The rift between the farmers and herdsmen has been an age long problem. Both of them are complementary elements, meaning, one cannot do without the other and at the same time problems arose in the course of their living together. This section tends to expose the position of the bible in solving the persistent war between the farmers and the herdsmen.

Exposition of Exodus 22:5 Exodus 22:5. *He that wilfully put his cattle into his neighbour's field, must make restitution of the best of his own.* The Jews hence observed it as a general rule, that restitution must always be made of the best; and that no man should keep any cattle that were likely to trespass upon his neighbour, or do him any damage. Genesis 47:6; Genesis 47:11, also of land. The verse contains difficulties, however; and two corrections have accordingly been proposed.²⁹ (1) Why, as no malicious intention seems to be imputed to the owner of the cattle, is compensation to be made from the best of his field? LXX. Sam. read words after 'another man's field,' which remove this difficulty, viz. '[he shall surely make it good from his own field according to its produce; but if it eat the whole of the field,] of the best of his own field,' &c.; the whole of the crop is eaten; the carelessness is accordingly greater, no judgement can be formed of the quality of the destroyed crop, and it is consequently to be replaced from the best which can be given. (2) This however by no means removes all the difficulties: (a) a 'vineyard' was not a pasture-ground for cattle, it was protected against animals by a stone fence, Isaiah 5:5; (b) the renderings 'cause to be eaten' and 'feed' (בער and הבעיר) are doubtful: to 'eat' or to 'feed' (i.e. to graze) is an uncertain rendering of בער, even in Isaiah 3:14; Isaiah 5:5; Isaiah 6:13; and both words elsewhere mean only to kindle (fire: so in v. 6), to burn, or (fig.) to destroy. Hence it is very probable that we should read with slight changes (בעירה for הבערה, and ובערה for ובער), 'If a man cause a field or a vineyard to be burnt [to destroy stubble or weeds, as is still the custom in Palestine in summer: cf. on ch. Exodus 15:7, and Verg. G. i. 84 f.], and let the burning (same word as in v. 6b, 'the fire') spread, and it burn in another man's field, of the best,' &c. (so Bā.; and, long before him, Aldis Wright, Journ. of Phil. iv., 1872, p. 72 f.): as the damage is due carelessness, if not (Wright) to incendiarism, the reason why compensation is to be made of the 'best' becomes apparent (cf. Cook, p. 202). Fire spreads rapidly in the hot summers of Palestine; and such carelessness is punished severely by the Arabs (L. and B.ii.293).³⁰

Exodus 22:5, 6. From the biblical view point, it is believed that, Compensation should be paid for damage done by cattle being allowed negligently to stray (v. 5—if the



text be sound); and by fire spreading accidentally (v. 6) to another man's field. Fulani herdsmen may find it so difficult to control their cattle, therefore it is impeccable to have a laid down principles that will guide anybody that his cattle to sway into the farmers farm.

Verses 5, 6. – The Old Testament established what we called **the Law of trespass**

- Next to theft, and not much behind it, is the wanton damage of what belongs to another - as when a person injures his neighbour's crops, either by turning beasts into his field, or by causing a conflagration in it. To turn beasts in was the more determinedly malicious act, and therefore the damage done was to be compensated by making over to the injured party a like quantity of produce out of the best that a man was possessed of; whereas simple restitution, was sufficient when fire had spread accidentally from a man's own land to his neighbour's.³¹ We may conclude that if the trespass of the cattle were accidental, simple restitution sufficed; and if the fire were kindled of set purpose, the heavier rate of penalty was exacted. Verse 5. - If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten. - Rather "to be eaten of," or "to be browsed upon." And shall feed. - Rather, "and it shall feed." Of the best, etc. - This means that, without reference to the quality of the crop damaged, the injurer should forfeit an equal amount of his own best produce.³²

Passing from life to property, in connection with the foregoing, the life of the animal, the most important possession of the Israelites, is first of all secured against destruction through carelessness. If anyone opened or dug a pit or cistern, and did not close it up again, and another man's ox or ass (mentioned, for the sake of example, as the most important animals among the livestock of the Israelites) fell in and was killed, the owner of the pit was to pay its full value, and the dead animal to belong to him. If an ox that was not known to be vicious gored another man's ox to death, the vicious animal was to be sold, and its money (what it fetched) to be divided; the dead animal was also to be divided, so that both parties bore an equal amount of damage. If, on the other hand, the ox had been known to be vicious before, and had not been kept in, carefully secured, by its possessor, he was to compensate the owner of the one that had been killed with the full value of an ox, but to receive the dead one instead. From the above exposition it is evident that there no where the Bible set aside a particular piece of land for grazing.³³ The herdsmen are free to move from one place to another with their cattle in as much as they don't trespass to the farm land. This paper from the Biblical perspectives did not in any way support ranches for the herdsmen. And farmers are not encouraged to harm any cow that trespassed into any farm. The law is that the herdsmen should prevent their cows from trespassing and if otherwise the restitution should be made.

CONCLUSION

This work concluded that, to avert future bloody clashes between herdsmen and farmers and to provide strong food security, the Federal Government should creatively strategize the law of trespass as in the book of Exodus, with relevant stakeholders to find a lasting solution to the problem. One thing that can be done to reduce the tension is to prevent establishing grazing zones across the country for the herdsmen. Once this is done, the problem will be minimized; government should now work on food security across the nation. This is because, the farmers will still claim their lands back as soon as Herdsmen settled. Government should therefore ensure that, the herdsmen strictly comply with the



grazing zone arrangement in compliance with the biblical injunction. This would, no doubt, greatly reduce friction over land resources. Equally, concerted efforts should be made to address the armed cattle rustling rings reportedly wreaking havoc in the northern part of the country. Appropriate government channels must be used to disconnect the crisis form evolving into ethnic or religious interpretations. This is where effective public enlightenment strategies come in. Strategic dissemination of information is key because we live in a country where people thrive on taking rumour and half-truth as the truth. But then, universally, wherever the people could not access official information, they make do with whatever information that is at their disposal. This, of course, is dangerous to the wellbeing of any nation. On a final note, before the herdsmen crisis transform into another Boko Haram menace, thereby complicating our peculiar socio-economic and political situation, now is the time to decisively deal with them. If Boko Haram had been effectively addressed from the outset, perhaps, it wouldn't have metamorphosed into the monster that it is right now.

This paper recommended that, there can be no solution to the intractable strife between pastoralists and agriculturalists so long as the problems of rangeland use are not addressed. The principle of open grazing in the book of exodus must be implemented; i.e. the law of trespassing in as much they are free to be in any part of the country. Any Fulani herdsmen trespassed to the farmers farm land must be held responsible and make to pay back without any violent. Also, the government in this onerous task is to attempt at striking a delicate balance among competing land users, without destroying the precarious equilibrium in nomadic pastoral enterprise. The key is enforcing land reform and preventing the demarcated grazing reserves for the intended users. It should also be within the government scope to ensure better stoking rates through improved herd quality. The Fulani should be made to appreciate the value of improved stock rather than keeping large number of herds for the sake of it. Above all, the traditional cattle breeders should be made to partake in collective land conservation as a sound range management practice, to avoid what scholars term the tragedy of the commons. The Fulani pastoralists must be seen to participate in policy formulation and implementation rather subject to be studied and to be at the receiving end of government decision making. Finally, this paper tends to call on Federal Government to shelve the idea of committing public funds on ranches and allow the owner of the business to attend to their business needs in the spirit of "*I belong to everybody*" mantra of the president. To go ahead with the plan is to say that cattle owners own this government and that would make other segments of society to say "*we have no inheritance in this arrangement.*"

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