
**DECIPHERING AUTHENTICITY OR INAUTHENTICITY IN PEOPLE OR THINGS
(MATT. 7:15-20): KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE IGBO CONCEPT “ONEBUNNE”**

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ABSTRACT: *Authenticity is the greatest virtue that is eluding humanity today and inauthenticity has invaded all aspects of human vocations and carriers. This is why Jesus was primarily against the Pharisees, Scribes, and it was the fundamental reason he calls them, “blind guides” and even “hypocrites” (Matt. 23). Yet, in the eyes of the Jews, the Pharisees, Chief Priests and Scribes are the best. They pretentiously behave as if they are the best. In the same way, our society today is filled with pretentious men and women. The implication is that among politicians, civil servants, clergymen and women, medical doctors, Christians and non-Christians, Muslims and non-Muslims, lawyers, and others, there exists authentic ones and inauthentic ones. The worst is that the inauthentic most often resembles the authentic hence deceptions are everywhere even in the assembly of believers. That is why Jesus in his wisdom warned his disciples to beware of false prophets who come to them in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves (Matt. 7:15). The problem is, how does one know and distinguish the counterfeit from the original since they look alike? This paper aims at understanding the Igbo concept of “Onebunne” in the context of deciphering false prophets from authentic prophets through their fruits. Textual Criticism and Thematic Interpretative method of exegesis were used both in the interpretation of Matt. 7:15-20 and the concept “Onebunne”. Significantly, this paper will be very relevant to all Igbos and non-Igbos for it exposes the full import of the concept “Onebunne.”*

KEYWORDS: onebunne, authenticity, inauthenticity.

INTRODUCTION

We live in difficult times in Nigeria today. There is nothing like steady electric supply, no water supply system, there is insecurity virtually in every part of the nation, bad road everywhere especially in the South-East of Nigeria, imbalance in federal government appointments despite Quota System enshrined in the Nigerian constitution, maladministration by the government of the day both in the federal, state and local government areas. All these situations provide ready tools for falsehood. They anchor on any of them or all of them to play on people’s psychology and the unsuspecting crowd, especially the gullible ones would see them as messiahs that have come to judgment. Thus, it is not hyperbolic to say that the electioneering period is a period when falsehood that seems to be the truth is almost on the lips of every politician. They make statements that are laden with promises that are rarely true or nearer to reality. They convincingly speak to people and in admiration, they believe them and vote them in. At the end of the day, when they assume

office, they will abandon those promises and follow their hidden scripts. To make the matter worst, during their campaign period, they distribute things ranging from money to material things; call them on phone during that period, they answer immediately, knock at their gate, they open the gate immediately, ask them a question, they attend to it satisfactorily and promptly but as soon as they assume office they distance themselves from the electorate on the claim of insecurity in the country.

Even in the religious arena, some claim to be what they are not. There are so many ministers and they all claim to have been called by God to be ministers when in actual fact, it is poverty that is propelling them. Lack of accountability is prevalent among false ministers. The greatest problem is that they even pray, look, walk, and dress like real ministers. This accounts for the proliferation of Churches in the world, especially in Nigeria.

This inauthenticity also affects goods and services. The volume of falsehoods going on in our various markets and government offices is alarming. This ranges from the declaration of age in the government offices to the value of goods and services down to actual costs of materials in the market. The above expositions questions the Christianity of Christians since Christians are really in the majority in Nigeria and even when they are not more populous, it is a little spoon of salt that salts a pot of soup as Ezeogamba (2019) exposed in his book, “The Christianity of Christians”. This work, therefore, struggles to answer the question, “*Onebunne?*”

Understanding the concept of *Onebunne* contextually.

The word *Onebunne* is an Igbo phrase that is made of three words namely, “*One,*” “*bu,*” and “*nne*”. *One?* though spells like the Roman numeral one, is a question. It simply means “how many?” The word “*bu*” is a verb that may be singular or plural. It is, therefore, the context that reveals whether it is singular or plural. Hence, it means either “is” or “are”. For instance, “his name is John” is translated in Igbo as, “*Aha ya bu John,*” whereas the sentence, “they are Israelites” is translated in Igbo thus, “*Ha bu ndi Israel*”. The third word, “*nne*” can mean two things in the Igbo language depending on the context. *Nne* means mother, it also means truth. In the context of *Onebunne*, it means “truth”. The full and literal English translation of *Onebunne* is “How many are true?” or “How many are authentic?” or “How many are correct?” That name questions always, “How many is truth?” “How many are authentic?” It is a name that warms, among all the things that have been said, how many are really true or authentic or practicable?

Authenticity, according to the New Webster’s Dictionary of the English Language, International Edition (2004) means “the quality of being authentic”. Authentic comes from the Greek word *authentēō* from autos, self. Put differently, it is the quality of being sincere, honest and faultless. Authentic means being true, or reliable or something that cannot be doubted. A good example is

the Holy Bible. For instance, we talk of the authenticity or inerrancy of the content of the Holy Bible. Broderick (2005) referring to the authenticity of the biblical text says,

Though often referred to as the inerrancy of the Bible, it is directed primarily at the trustworthiness of the text, its official recognition by authorities, and the exactness with which it expresses the known thought of the Scripture. The Scriptures derive their authenticity first from the authors of the books and second from the studied declaration of the Church” p.57.

The implication is that whatever the pages of the Holy Scripture say is correct and can never be doubted by the believers. Anyone, therefore, who cannot be trusted is seen as inauthentic or hypocrite especially when one claims what he/she is not.

The ***Onebunne Concept and Hypocrisy***: Anyone that asks, “*onebunne?*” is one who is being careful from the beginning to avoid making mistakes. The phrase *onebunne* has a lot to do with deciphering who is authentic and who is a hypocrite. The parable of Wheat and Tares touches on this idea of the real and unreal (Matt 13:24-30). Anambra state is preparing for the gubernatorial election which is to take place on 6th November 2021 and it has not less than 14 candidates vying for the Anambra state Government house popularly known as “*Agu-Awka*”. The greatest problem now for Anambrarians is who is actually who among these 14 candidates. They all have wonderful curriculum vitae with wonderful manifestoes. Who among them will implement his manifesto? In other words, *onebunne* among them? According to Bowe (1996) a hypocrite is,

An actor, one who plays a role on stage. Its metaphoric sense connotes a pretender or dissembler, and this is the meaning that prevails in the Bible. A hypocrite is one who displays exterior piety without interior devotion, one whose actions conform to ritual obligations but whose heart is without intention p.455.

In the same vein, Greenlee, H. and Killen A. (2005) defined hypocrisy in the context of Greek drama as a term “applied to an actor on the theatre stage. Since an actor pretends to be someone other himself, *hypokritēs* was applied metaphorically to a person who acts a part in real life, pretending to be better than he actually is, one who simulates goodness”p.823. It thus points towards inauthenticity, imitation, deceptive, lawlessness and insincerity. No wonder Jesus warned his followers against the “leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy” (Matt 12:1). Henry (2012) says, “False prophets are those who produce false commissions, who pretend to have immediate warrant and direction from God to set up for prophets . . . those who preach false doctrines in those things that are essential to religion; who teach that which is contrary to the truth as it is in Jesus, to the truth which is according to godliness” p. 1307. They are, therefore, nothing but pretenders.

Again, Fisher (1996) further averred, “Empty displays of piety are labelled hypocrisy in Matt 6:5 because they serve only to impress others and lack sincerity of heart” This idea is captured in the

assertion “this people honours me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me” (Isa 29:13/Matt 15:7). This idea can also be seen in such passages as Mic 6:8; Isa 1:11-17. This implies one must live according to one’s profession. This double or masquerading type of life or living a life contrary to one’s vocation is what Ezeogamba (2019) dealt with when he questions the Christianity of Christians (pp.125-137). Hypocrisy in the New Testament is seen clearly in Jesus’ polemic exchange with the Pharisees or Jewish opponents especially in chapters 6 and 23 of Matthew’s gospel (Fisher 1996, p.456). Even among the chosen, hypocrisy is not a foreigner. One has to recall to mind here the situation that arose between Peter and Paul and Judaizers. Paul had to accuse Peter of being a hypocrite (Matt 23:28) because of the insincerity and dissimulation he portrayed in the presence of the circumcision party (Gal 2:13). Ananias and Sapphira also hypocritically connived and lied so as to deceive the apostles, death was the consequence of that. Remember that they were believed by some of those that heard Ananias in the first instance except Peter (Acts 5:1-11). Peter was able to decipher the falsehood. In the same way, when APC was campaigning against the PDP, APC and Muhammad Buhari made a lot of promises, for instance, a dollar will be N1 to \$1; insecurity will be fought to a standstill, PMS/Fuel will sell below N65, bribery and corruption will be a thing of the past, rule of law and due process will be upheld, electricity will be steady and affordable within the first six months of their assumption to office. People applauded them but PDP her candidates were not applauding them like the rest of the people instead they made it clear that if the APC and their candidate are elected know that Nigeria will be entering into a reversed gear, that they are going to lead us 50 years backward on our way to development. This they demonstrated with children running a relay race. On that relay race, PDP candidate, Goodluck Ebere Jonathan was running forward and people were hailing him but immediately the baton was handed over to Muhammad Buhari he started running backwards instead of forward. A deep look into Buhari Administration reveals that clearly. The worst thing that can happen to anyone is to be a hypocrite or pharisaic without knowing that (Matt 7:20-23). As a result of the understanding of the phrase, *onebunne*, Paul reveals that in the last days there will be people who follow evil spirits and doctrines of demons and speak lies in hypocrisy (1 Tim 4:1-2). Those last days seem to be with us now. A Christian must, therefore, be careful so as to eliminate any atom of hypocrisy in his/her life (1 Pet. 2:1).

Unity and Delimitation of Matt. 7:15-20: Matthew 7:15-20 is a unit that deals specifically with warning and how to avoid being bamboozled or beguiled as a result of the appearance of false prophets. First, there is a warning and secondly, there is a description of how to decipher among them so as to find out how many are real or authentic (*onebunne*). Hence, there is a warning and there is an encouragement to lip before one jumps or to ask, *onebunne?* V15 is like a superstructure which is a warning against false prophets and verses 16-20 are the foundation or what gives meaning to the structure or the criterion for recognizing the false prophets which are the deeds of the prophet. Hence, ka onye si eme ka ekwe si akpo ya (one’s behaviour determines one’s integrity). That is why one sees in verses 16 and 20 such statements as “*apo tōn karpōn autōn epignōsesthe*”

(from their fruits you shall know them) thus they form an *inclusio*. It implies that *epignōsesthe* of v16 forms an *inclusio* with *epignōsesthe* of v.20 (Craig, 1993). This confirms the unity of the text. Thus, the centre of this work is 7:15-20 in the context of the Igbo concept, *onebunne*, any other reference to any other chapters and verses may be references to authenticate facts.

Synoptic of Matt 7:15-20: There is no doubt that this portion is part of the double tradition or Quelle materials in the New Testament. So it is part of the materials Matthew and Luke have in common of which Mark is ignorant. This implies that Matt 7:15-20 is parallel to Luke 6:43-45,

Textual Criticism is a branch of criticism that investigates the origins of ancient texts in order to understand the world behind the text. According to Soulen (1981)

The function and purpose of Textual Criticism are of a dual nature: (1) To reconstruct the original wording of the Biblical text; and (2) to establish the history of the transmission of the text through the centuries. The first of these two is in fact hypothetical and unattainable. In every instance the original copy (called the autograph) of the books of the Bible is lost, hence every reconstruction is a matter of conjecture. Textual criticism's task, therefore, is to compare existing MSS, no two of which are alike, in order to develop a **critical text** which lists variant readings in footnotes, called a "**critical apparatus**" p. 192.

Textual criticism, therefore, examines manuscripts so as to get to the original text or nearer to the original text so as to interpret the text that exposes the mind of the author. Let us now critically examine Matt. 7:15-20 bearing the above idea in mind. Summarily, verses 15-20 of chapter 7 of Matthew have six critical problems which show that different manuscripts that recorded Matt 7:15-20 have six variant/different readings and each of these manuscripts claims to be the original text or closest to the original. This study uses Nestle-Aland (2001), Novum Testamentum Graece (27th Edition) as the basis for the comparison of different manuscripts to guess what seems to be very close to the original or the original itself.

In verse 15 there is an insertion of the particle "*de*" which is a discourse particle meaning "but", or "and" by the following manuscripts, Majority text, including the Byzantine Koine text which indicates readings supported by the majority of all manuscripts, sy^h which is a Syriac version known as Harklensis named after Thomas of Harkel in AD 616. It is the only Syriac version that contains the whole NT. Another manuscript that has *de* is sa^{mss} which is two or more Sahidic manuscripts. Another manuscript that has *de* is bo which is known as the Bohairic manuscript. Alexandrian texts like Codex L (8th cent.), MSS 33 (9th cent.) have *de*. Again, Byzantine texts like Ephraemi (C), Washingtonianus (W) have *de* as well. Others include Θ 0281 f^{1.13} f q. They all have the discourse particle *de*. But Nestle-Aland is supported by most ancient manuscripts like Sinaiticus which is a 4th-century manuscript that contains the entire NT texts; Vaticanus which is also a 4th-century manuscript that is best in gospels; as well as some uncials like 0250 and 565, etc. Considering the meaning of *de* ('but' or 'and'), its addition is superfluous considering the age of manuscripts that omitted it and those that inserted it. It must be as a result of scribal correction.

Verse 16 has an alternative reading of a word which is *staphulas* (grapes) which is an accusative plural which comes from the word *staphulē* (grape), Our primary text, Nestle-Aland has *staphulas* but manuscripts like Ephraemi (C) has *staphulēn* which is accusative singular; again, manuscripts like L W Θ f³ and majority texts have *staphulēnas*. The correct word that ought to be there is *staphulas* which is in the accusative case whereas *staphulēnas* must be as a result of exegetical misjudgment or at best an editorial fatigue. *Staphulas* is upheld by the following ancient manuscripts, Sinaiticus which is a 4th-century manuscript; Vaticanus which is also a 4th-century manuscript as well as 0250 and 0281 etc.

Verse 17 has transposition of the following words, *kalous poiei* (good produces). The original edition of Vaticanus has *poiei kalous* (produces good). This makes more sense though both mean the same thing. The only difference is which one comes first, but who reads has to read meaning into what one reads. The sentence reads thus, “Produces good fruit.” The present writer accepts this over what Nestle-Aland has.

Verse 18 has two critical problems and both are alternative reading of words. Firstly, Nestle-Aland has *poiein* which is present active infinitive from the word *poieō* meaning “to make, form, construct” (Matt. 17:4; Acts 4:24). It refers to God as “the maker.” It can also refer to the idea of “to establish, ratify, assume” but manuscripts like Vaticanus and Or^{pl} have *enegkein* which is also second aorist, active infinitive meaning, “to bear”. *Poiein* and *enegkein* are parallel to one another. Each can stand for the other. Manuscripts like Sinaiticus, C L W and others used *poiein*. Such is not far from being as a result of Scribal’s personal decision. But any of them may be used without changing the meaning of the sentence. The second critical problem is also as a result of the use of that the same word *poiein*. It is a matter of consistency. Those who made use of *poiein* are consistent in its use whereas those who used *enegkein* were also consistent.

Finally, verse 19 has an insertion of a word, *oun* by the following manuscripts C^{vid} L Z f and others. It is mere conjunction expressing either a simple sequence or consequence. It means “then,” “now then,” “thereupon,” “therefore,” “consequently,” it also serves to mark the resumption of discourse after an interruption by parenthesis as used in 1 Cor. 8:4 (Wesley, 2001)p. 299. If this word is added it is just for emphasis or expression of the consequence of action or behaviour and if not added, it has not swallowed up the consequence of the action or behaviour. The consequence is clearly spent even without it but to add it would have made a better meaning. The implication is that its addition must as a result of the editorial correction.

Semantic of Matt 7:15-20: Here, we explain some important vocabularies that will make the understanding of this passage in the context of *onebunne* to be easier. Such words include: *Prosechete* which is second person plural, present active indicative and it is an imperative from the Greek word, *prosechō* meaning especially when followed by *apo*, *mē*, or *mēpote* “to beware of, take heed of, guard against” as it was used in Matt 6:1; 7:15. A sort of command and warning.

Another important word that exposes the content of verse 15 is *erchontai*. This is 3rd person plural present middle or passive, deponent indicative (but active in meaning) from the word, *erchomai* meaning “to go, to pass, to come” (Merrill, 1984). The coming of someone includes the one’s appearance and mood of coming or reason of coming.

In verse 16 and 20 we have such words as *epignōsesthe* which second person plural, future, middle indicative, it is also a deponent verb from the word *epignōskō* (*epi* + *gnōskō*) which generally mean to make a thing a subject of observation; hence, to arrive at knowledge from preliminaries; to attain to a knowledge of something. But as used in Matt. 7:16 it means simply, “to discern, or to detect” (Wesley, 2001). This idea of discernment is what this paper wants to portray and to remind all of the Shakespearean adages that says, “All that glitters is not gold.” Thus, the Igbo concept, *onebunne!* Once one discerns properly through a laid down principle, one may likely come to the truth itself. Another word that is of interest is this word in verse 16, *sullegousin* which is 3rd person plural, the present indicative active mood from the word *sullegō* (*sun* + *legō*) as used in 7:16; or 13:28 means “to collect, or to gather”. In a wider sense, it can mean to reap, to benefit, to receive and the like. A bad person does not offer goodness and a good person does not offer badness. By implication, no one sees a bad person and expect anything good from him or her. Where one needs serious discernment is when a tree appears to be a good tree or appears to be fruitful but the reverse is actually the case. A good example of such a pretence is the encounter Jesus had with the fig tree. Jesus discovered on a fig tree that ostensibly showed features of a fig that has fruits when in actual facts it has not; Jesus and his disciples came to gather fruits from the fig but were disappointed and that fig tree received its own reward for such a pretentious lifestyle (Mark 11:12-14, 20-25).

Again in verse 17 as well as in John 11:47, there is a word that goes to expose the substance of a being and that word is *poiei* which is 3rd person singular, the present indicative active mood from the word, *poieō* meaning “to make, effect, bring to pass, cause to take place, do, accomplish” (Wesley, 2001). The major interest of this meaning is “to cause to take place, to make something happen, to cause something to happen. This is at the level of production. It exposes the intrinsic meaning of the Latin adage which says, “*Nemo dat quod non habet*”, no one produces what is not his/her nature or what he/she has not. One cannot do what he is not capable of doing.

Verse 18 offers such words as *dunatai* which is also a 3rd person singular present indicative middle/passive mood. It is also a deponent verb and comes from the word *dunamai*. According to Wesley (2001), *dunamai* means, “to be able, either intrinsically and absolutely, which is the ordinary signification; or, for specific reasons” p.108. It implies that it is how a tree stands so does it falls unless there is any external force from any angle. Mango tree cannot produce pear but mangoes. Thus, mangoes are intrinsically the product of a mango tree. This verse has also *enegkein* which is the 2nd aorist, active mood and an infinitive from the Greek word, *pherō* meaning

“to bear”. It has an affinity with *poiei* of verse 17. The implication is that “to bear” and “to produce” can stand for each other depending on the context. In the context of Matthew 7:15-20, both words mean the same thing.

Finally, in verse 19, *poieō* was also used but its present indicative active mood which is also participle, nominative singular, neuter *poioun*. Another word that is very important is the one that explains what will happen to a tree that does not bear good fruit and indirectly to a prophet that refuses to bear good fruit by leading people astray. It will be *ekkoptetai*. It is 3rd person singular, present passive indicative from the word *ekkoptō* (*ek* + *koptō*) meaning “to cut out; to cut off, to remove, to render ineffectual” (Wesley, 2001) p.126. These are all nuances of the meaning of the above word. It is like a warning to false prophets, anyone that does not produce/bears the required fruit or pretends to be producing/bearing bad fruit would be cut down and removed. There is still another verb that was used to demonstrate fully the final end of bad trees or false prophets or those that bring about confusions or hypocrites namely, *balletai*. This is 3rd person singular, present indicative, passive from the word *ballō* meaning “to throw, to cast, and to lay”. The implication is that the bad tree or false prophet will not only be cut down or removed but it must also be thrown away, cast away or even be thrown into the fire.

Content of Matt 7:15-20

False Prophets (v.15): False prophets refer to any who falsely claim to be the spiritual leaders of the people which they are not, including even some of the most scrupulous of God’s people (Leske, 2004). Here the false prophets can also be referred to as lying teachers who charm the public by their show of piety while pursuing their own selfish ends. This idea is very similar to what Jesus expressed in Matt 24:4ff where he said, “take care that no one deceives you because many will come using my name and saying, ‘I am the Christ . . .’” They claim to be what they are not. France (2007) sees false prophets as “A recurrent problem in the OT, and Matthew’s term here, *pseudoprophetēs*, occurs in LXX Zech. 13:2 and often in Jeremiah, who found himself frequently pitted against the more popular prophets who proclaimed ‘peace’ when there was no peace (Jer. 6:3-14; 28:1-17)” p.289. The greatest problem is that majority of people always love false and shiny prophets and prefer them to authentic prophets. The encounter of prophet Micaiah son of Imlah against 400 false prophets comes to mind here. The king of Israel prefers their false prophecy to the true prophecy of Micaiah (1 Kings 22:5-28). Another OT example of false prophets and their influence over the people is seen in 1 Kings 18:20-40 which is the account of the encounter of Elijah and the false prophets of Baal. When Elijah exposed the false prophets and their falsehood, 450 of them were put to death immediately.

Furthermore, in the NT apart from Matt. 7:15 there are other places where a warning was given against the false prophets and they include Matt. 24:11, 24; Acts 20:29. In reaction to the above, France (2007) says, “There is, of course, no evidence that ‘prophecy’ as such featured in the

disciple group during Jesus' ministry, but it quickly became a prominent feature of early Christian congregational life, and almost as quickly became subject to abuse. The warnings of 24:11, 24 indicate that Jesus was aware of this future hazard, as indeed OT experience might lead one to expect". p.289.

What is very clear in verse 15 is that false prophets most often are not really the members of the community for all the members of the community know one another. Hence, the false prophet will definitely come from outside and finely dressed just to deceive. Elise (2021) says,

A group of conmen who dressed up as cardinals to swindle victims out of millions of dollars have been caught by Italian police, in an undercover sting operation conducted by officers who were disguised as priests. Members of the *Carabinieri*, the Italian military police who enjoy broad authority in Italy, set the trap at the Basilica of Holy Mary of Angels and Martyrs in central Rome after receiving complaints from two hotels that were scammed out of 20,000 euros (\$23,631) and 75,000 euros (\$88,616) in 2017

The implication is that they pretend to be members when in actual fact they are not members at all. They are actors that claim to be what they are not. They dress as if they are authentic members but underneath they are ravenous wolves. Hence, *cucullus non facit monachum* (habit does not make a monk). A person should not, therefore, be judged by just his dress, looks, appearance, but by their characters or behaviours. The above shows that fake/hypocrite is everywhere. One has to beware that everything is really possible when it comes to fake.

The people of God both in the OT and NT are regarded as a flock of God or God's sheep and God is the shepherd (Ezek. 34:10; Zech. 11:17; 13:7; Psalm 74:1; Matt 9:36; 10:6, 16; 15:24; 18:12-13; 25:32-33; 26:31). This might be the source of the imagery of the wolves that dress in sheep's clothing (Harrington, 2007). This shows that they appear like the real sheep but they are covering themselves with what is not natural just to deceive. A good example is the statement of Isaac when he said, "The voice is Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's" (Gen. 27:22). Women's makeup and different types of wear in modern times have exposed a lot of mild facades to the extent that one finds it difficult to know who is actually beautiful or ugly. Everyone that wishes to be fair in complexion during the week may also decide to remain black during the weekend. The colour of hair one sees does not show the actual colour of the hair of the person, hence, *onebunne?* The wolves must necessarily disguise themselves in order to confuse sheep so as to get them cheap. Zephaniah attest to the above when he said, "The rulers she has are roaring lions, her judges are wolves of the wastelands which leave nothing over for the morning, her prophets are braggarts, impostors, her priests have profaned what is holy and violated the Law (Zeph. 3:3-4). Henry (2012) opines that "Every hypocrite is a goat in sheep's clothing; not only not a sheep, but the worst enemy the sheep has, that comes not but to tear and devour, to scatter the sheep (John 10:12), to

drive them from God, and from one another, into crooked paths” p.1307. No wonder Barclay (1997) says,

A man might wear a shepherd’s dress and still not be a shepherd. The prophets had acquired a conventional dress. Elijah had a mantle (1Kings 19:13, 19), and that mantle had been a hairy cloak (2Kings 1:8). That sheepskin mantle had become the uniform of the prophets, just as the Greek philosophers had worn the philosopher’s robe. It was by that mantle that the prophet could be distinguished from other men. But sometimes that garb was worn by those who had no right to wear it.p.282.

The word “Beware!” warns one to scrutinize, be cautious and alert to risks, differentiate, distinguish and discriminate before embracing any idea or persons because many claims to be what they are not. It means that people should not just be taken in their face values (1 Cor 14:29, 37-38; 2Thess.2:1-3). France (2007) adds, especially “when they claim to speak for God” p. 290. That is, prophets should be scrutinized when they claim to be speaking for God. False prophets/teachers seem to have thrived because there used to be honest and sincere prophets or teachers from God. For instance, there is a blessing placed on the head of one who receives a prophet because he is one (Matt. 10:41; 23:34). Thus, people go about welcoming conmen and hoodlums in the name of prophets. Barclay (1997) went even further to explain what makes false prophets or conmen very dangerous; for him the basic fault of the false prophet “is self-interest. The true shepherd cares for the flock more than he cares for his life; the wolf cares for nothing but to satisfy his own gluttony and his own greed. The false prophet is in the business of teaching, not for what he can give to others, but for what he can get to himself” p.284. In the same vein, Henry (2012) takes the warning thus and advises, “Well, beware of them, suspect them, try them, and when you have discovered their falsehood, avoid them, have nothing to do with them, stand upon your guard against this temptation, which commonly attends the days of reformation, and the breakings out of divine light in more than ordinary strength and splendour” p.1307.

By Their Fruits, You Shall Them/Onebunne (Vv 16a, 20). The fruit according to Matthew’s gospel is seen as behaviour (Matt 3:8); it is the manifested character or behaviour of someone (Matt 12:33-34); it is the lifestyle of someone (Matt 13:8, 23); it is also the life and loyalty which God expects of his people (Matt 21:33-43). That is why France (2007) calls the above phrase, “an ethical metaphor” p.291. Through the fruits the prophets produce, one can decipher which among them is authentic or inauthentic or even describe them. In the author’s own house, for instance, there are two pear trees. One of the trees produces sweet pear and the other produces pears that have high oil content and taste sour (i.e. like lemon or vinegar) in the mouth. The funny thing is that their fruits resemble so much to the extent that if someone gives you both you cannot distinguish through their appearance. What all of us who are aware of this similarity resort to is that anytime one offers you the pear from the house, the first question would be, from which of

the two pear trees are the pears coming from? No one really enjoys taking pear from that particular tree that produces sour fruits. Henry (2012) makes this suggestion,

By the fruits of their persons, and the course of their conversation, you would know whether they be right or not, observe how they live; their works will testify for them or against them. The Scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' chair and taught the Law, but they were proud and covetous, and false, and oppressive, and therefore Christ warned his disciples to beware of them and of their leaven (Mark 12:38) p.1307.

Jeremiah had conflicts with the prophets who proclaimed, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace" (Jer. 6:14; 8:11). They are false prophets if what they predicted does not happen (Deut. 18:21-22). The Holy Writ quickly ordered that even if a prophet's words do come true, they are to be rejected if they call God's people to follow other gods (Deut. 13:1-6). The ungodly behaviour of false prophets also expose them and reveal what they are (Jer. 23:9-15). For Jesus, the way a prophet lives his life matters a lot (v.16). Thorns and thistles are in the Old Testament symbols of the fall into sin (Gen 3:18; Hos 10:8; Isa. 7:23-25) and the desolation it brings (Leske, 2004).

Politicians and Falsehood: Most of the people that come out for one political office or the other present themselves as a kind of messiah that wants to save his fellow citizens from hardship when in actual fact they are struggling to better their own lots and that of their household. A good example is what happened in Nigeria before 2015 when Muhammadu Buhari became president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Nigeria witnessed insecurity and even fuel scarcity and employment, and even high school dropout and so many others. Buhari and his campaign theme studied the situation and presented a sort of master plan that would make Nigeria a Uhuru. Mayowa (2015) wrote in The Cable that Buhari and APC made the following promises to Nigerians and reiterated them after Buhari's 100 days in office. He told Nigerians among other things that his administration will do the following:

1. Public declaration of assets and liabilities;
2. Ban on all government officials from seeking medical care abroad;
3. Revival of Ajaokute steel company;
4. Empowerment scheme to employ 740,000 graduates across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory;
5. 720,000 jobs by the 36 states in the Federation per annum (20,000 per state);
6. Eradication of state of origin, replacing that with state of residence to ensure Nigerians are Nigerians first, before anything else;
7. Working with the National Assembly towards the immediate enactment of a Whistle Blower Act;
8. Establishing a conflict resolution commission to help prevent, mitigate and resolve civil conflicts within the polity;
9. Permanent peace in the Niger Delta and other conflict-prone areas such as Plateau, Taraba, Bauchi, Borno and Abia;
10. Nationwide sanitation plans to keep Nigeria clean;
11. Construction of 3,000km of superhighway including service trunks;
12. At least one functioning airport is available in each of the 36 states;
13. Stabilizing the naira;
- 14.

Strengthening INEC to reduce, if possible, eliminate electoral malpractices in Nigerian's political life; 15. Free Education at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and Education.

What is very obvious is that all these promises are not kept at all. Today, the lives and properties of Nigerians are highly at risk to the extent that travelling on Nigerian roads is like taking 95 risks with one's life. The sacredness of human life has been bastardized. Insecurity is at its pick. There is one type of insecurity in all the regions of Nigeria or the other. It is worst today to the extent that in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria living your house every Monday is like someone deliberately signing his or her death warrant. But campaigns of Buhari and APC presented President Buhari as a messiah. A lot of people are today biting their fingers. The implication is that some people see all their campaigns of 2015 as very unreliable and life is very difficult in Nigeria at the moment.

Evaluation and Conclusion: *Onebunne* is a wonderful Igbo concept that if one has it always at the back of one's mind while listening to people, one would be able to decipher falsehood from reality. The work argues that if one has the concept of *onebunne* guiding one, it will be very hard for one to be confused or tricked by numerous false prophets, ministers, traders, politicians, religious men and women, Imans and others. The work recommends that everyone must have the concept of *onebunne* in one's day to day interaction with people. For one to know the authenticity of any speaker you must consider the following: who is he? What is his past like? What did he say? What is his lifestyle? Then ask yourself, *onebunne*? Never accept a politician, prophet, minister, etc at their face value. Look before you jump. Reflect before you jump to any conclusion.

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