

## ELECTION OF MATTHIAS (ACTS 1: 12-26): LESSONS FOR DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*Election is mostly conducted in a nation, community or society whenever there is immediate vacancy or where the existence of vacancy is imminent. Mostly, election is done so as to avert constitutional crisis. Such an election is always successful to the admiration and acceptability of all and sundry when the majority have sincere heart and intention and working selflessly towards communal wellbeing. Admiration and acceptability of any electoral outcome depend solely on the faithful observance of laid down criteria for the said election. Compromise of any electoral criteria (law) gives room for outright rejection of results which may eventually leads to anarchy if not properly managed by the court of the said land. Election of Matthias in Acts 1:12-26 shows oneness of purpose, and willingness to follow a laid down criteria for anyone who would replace the impaired disciple. The criteria suggested two qualified candidates. Eventually, Matthias was unanimously elected and admirably accepted. The aim of this paper is to show that the majority of the electoral outcome that are rejected and contested in court are those the criteria that led to them were highly compromised. The paper argues that if Nigerians were to respect her electoral laws in every election then there will be little or no suit challenging the outcome of such elections in court. Significantly, the outcome of this work will benefit all Nigerians and indeed all nations of the world. The method we shall employ is exegesis of Acts 1:12-26 and library research.*

**Keywords:** Election, Democracy, and Governance

### **Introduction**

Election in Nigeria is guided by the Nigerian Constitution and most especially the Electoral Act. The Electoral Act itself, just like the constitution, undergoes amendments regularly to accommodate every situation until a perfect Electoral Act is obtained or constitution is obtained (if there is anything like perfect constitution here on earth). Nigerian Electoral Act takes care of everything concerning the election of all political leaders ruling the country. Primarily, it contains information concerning pre-party primaries, party primaries, campaign rallies, transportation of electoral materials, election itself, announcement of election results at the pooling boots, to the final level of the announcement of the overall actual winners, and secondarily, conditions for the institution of Election Tribunals and the appointment of the members of the tribunal, etc. Any stage, especially the primary ones, that is not observed affects the result of the election. Electoral Act also provides conditions of removing a serving political office holder be it Ward Councilor, Local Government Chairman, State Legislature, State Governor, etc. For instance, section 115A (1) of the amended 2015 Electoral Act provides process of removing and replacing of a permanently incapacitated Chairman or Vice Chairman of a Local Government Area or Area Council thus:

The Chairman or Vice-Chairman of an Area Council shall cease to hold office if- (a) by resolution passed by two-thirds majority of all members of the Executive Council of the Area Council, it is declared that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman is incapable of discharging the functions of his office; and (b) the declaration in paragraph (a) of this subsection is verified after such medical examination panel established under subsection (4) of this section in its report to the Speaker of the Area Legislative Council (Nigerian Electoral Act: [www.nassig.org](http://www.nassig.org).)

The Electoral Act also to avoid biased removal of a political office holder, argues that before the incapacitation of an office holder is accepted, there must be in place a medical panel that must certify the alleged incapacitation. In order to avoid conspiracy, the medical panel shall be made up of five medical practitioners from Nigeria. It emphasizes that one of the medical practitioners must be the personal physician of the office holder concerned and the other four medical practitioners must be taken from among those who have attained a high degree of eminence in the field of medicine related to the nature of examination to be conducted. The above is an already established method of the removal of a political office holder who is considered to be medically unfit to rule. If the above is always followed judiciously, there will be peace after anytime it is carried out. Sections 115 and 116 also provide that if the Chairman of a Local Government Area is incapacitated by reason of death, resignation, permanent incapacity or removal from office by any other reason, the Vice-Chairman

takes over without any waste of time and if it is the Vice-Chairman that is in jeopardy, the Chairman appoints one who will be ratified by the legislative arm of the Area Council. In the same vein, if both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have problem at the same time, the Speaker takes over but must relinquish the office not further than three months (Nigerian Electoral Act: 115 and 116). There is also process of removing a political office holders accused of gross misconduct. If the right process as enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution and Electoral Act are properly followed, no one would quarrel after any impeachment.

Election is generally understood as an event at which people vote into power one who will lead them. It is an organized event at which somebody is chosen by vote for something most especially a public office. It can be seen as the act of choosing somebody or being chosen by vote. In the same vein, it can also be seen as the act of selecting somebody or the act of being selected through vote to represent a group (Webster's Dictionary). If election must involve voting, or choosing, or selecting somebody to represent a group, one must make his choice from two or three or more options. The options must have the approved requirements so as to qualify to be part of the options. If the laid down procedure is properly followed, there will be peace after every election. This work is divided into the following parts, (I) Electoral Fraud in Nigeria; (II) Exegesis of Acts 1:12-26 (III) Application (IV) Evaluation (V) Recommendations (VI) Conclusion

### **Electoral Fraud in Nigeria**

There has been allegations and counter allegations after elections in Nigeria since 1999. This is most often attested by both national and international observers. The accusation always is that people's votes were blatantly stolen, rigged, and the mandate of the people hijacked by political elites and given to one who never won the election through violence or monetary inducement. No political party has the monopoly of this electoral violence and fraud. The poor and innocent youths are not the only group used most often to perpetuate most electoral violence and frauds. Perfect frauds are committed through members of the electoral body, i.e. members of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). For instance, on April 11, 2017 a statement signed by INEC National Commissioner, Mr. Mohammed Haruna, condemning her staff for involvement in electoral fraud, reads in part:

Based on their level of involvement, two hundred and five (205) serving INEC staff will be immediately placed on interdiction, which entails suspension from duties and being placed on half salary, pending the final determination of the cases they have with the EFCC. Seventy staff (70), about whom there was insufficient information regarding their involvement, will be referred back to EFCC for further investigation and possible prosecution. Out of over 23 billion Naira which the EFCC reported said was used to influence the elections, the Committee established that N3, 046,829,000 was received by INEC staff in 16 states (Channels Television: [www.channels.com](http://www.channels.com)).

There is no doubt that this is what have been happening all along. Money most often exchanged hands for the purpose of rigging elections or for performing odd jobs so as to impeach honest and sincere leaders. Whenever such happens, honesty is thrown to the winds. Again, Governor Nyesom Wike of Rivers state recently accused the Nigerian Army and the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian Police of hijacking election materials in Rivers South East district rerun election. According to him, there were mass sporadic shootings by them in Khana, Gokana, Akuku-Toru and Etche Local Government Areas during the December 11th 2016 National Assembly rerun election in the state. He even accused them of killing and maiming PDP agents with the sole intention of delivering a particular candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in the senatorial district. He was also of the opinion that even the INEC was disposed to rig the election in union with the security agents in favour of APC (UNIC Press: [unic.press.com](http://unic.press.com)). This claim of Wike is contrary to INEC and Police Interim report as regards the said election. Police on their own also indicted the River's government of being the mastermind behind the violence experienced during the December 11th, 2016 elections in the state. In the same vein, Osagie Ize-Iyamu, a PDP gubernatorial candidate in the 28th September, 2016 election, is at the moment challenging the election of Mr. Godwin Obaseki a declared winner of the said election. According to him, there were widespread irregularities in the election that produced Mr. Obaseki of APC (Premium Times: [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com)).

Furthermore, 2014 general election was postponed on security reasons but the opposition party then (APC) cried foul. They shouted because they never trusted the PDP led Federal Government. For APC then, it was a ploy to delay the election and perfect their rigging strategy. The then head of Election Management Body (EMB), Prof. Attahiru M. Jega, at a press conference on February 7th, 2014 made it very clear to all that the conduct of a successful election does not solely depend on them but also on some important variables outside the authority of EMB. The most important variable is security. For Prof. Jega, the commission was almost ready for the election to hold since as at 5th February, 2015, the total number of PVCs collected was 45,829,808 representing 66.58% of the total number of registered voters. With the above, EMB felt that they were ready for the election. Every sensible person would wonder if second class upper has become more fashionable than first class. What is B if A is possible? Again, since the security of life and property is specifically the concern of Electoral Commission, it would be foolhardy to neglect the security of at least 600,000 ad hoc staff which constituted mainly of young men and women; their regular staff, voters, election observers as well as election materials they struggled to acquire. If not for the security concerns, with the number that have received their PVC, the Commission has felt that it was not yet perfect or fully prepared but according to them their level of preparedness, despite a few challenges, is sufficient to conduct free, fair and credible elections as scheduled on February 14th and February 28th 2015. The plan to reschedule the election came from the security report from National Security Adviser (NSA) drawing attention to the recent developments in four Northeast states (Borno, Yobe, Adamawa and Gombe) currently experiencing the challenge of insurgency. NSA concluded by saying that security of life and property could not be guaranteed during the proposed period in February for the general election. The opposition party then saw that as a mere gimmick so as to manipulate the outcome of the election or even the tactics to delay the defeat of the incumbents. Despite the protest by the opposition party, the electoral body postponed the elections to March 28th and April 11th, 2015 for National elections (Presidential and Senatorial elections) and State elections (Governorship and States House of Assembly elections) respectively. INEC postponed the election based on Section 26(1) of the Electoral Act 2010 as amended which states,

Where a date has been appointed for the holding of an election, and there is reason to believe that a serious breach of the peace is likely to occur if the election is proceeded with on that date or it is impossible to conduct the elections as a result of natural disasters or other emergencies, the commission may postpone the election and shall in respect of the area, or areas concerned, appoint another date for the holding of the postponed election, provided that such reason for the postponement is cogent and verifiable.

The above is firmly supported by such places in the electoral act of 2010 as amended namely, sections 132 (2) and 178 (2), as well as Section 25 (Premium Times: [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com)). Despite the fact that INEC postponed the above election as a result of the security warnings given by the NSA, when the opposition party came on board as the ruling party, the INEC under their watch refused to postpone the Ondo State gubernatorial election even when they knew that one of the candidates was highly disadvantaged as a result of the court cases leveled against him. The Nigeria's main opposition party, PDP called for the postponement of the then November 26, 2016 governorship election in Ondo state citing the late determination of the rightful candidate of their party in the election. But INEC ignored them even when if postponed, would not be bridging the electoral act. The PDP in Ondo state having observed the way things were moving, they cried woes and blamed the ruling party as well as Jimoh Ibrahim a factional candidate of PDP in the same election and said,

We are aware that this is part of the plan to use the judicial process, security agencies and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to rig the election in favour of the ruling party (APC) before the election day. We call on all well meaning Nigerians to urge the All Progressives Congress (APC) led Federal Government to desist from the use of organs of the Nigerian State as a tool with which to subvert the will of the Nigerian people. At this point, we must urge all Nigerians to hold the Federal Government, INEC, APC and the Jimoh Ibrahim group for any consequences of the dangerous games that they have chosen to play with the Nigerian people (Premium Times: [www.premiumtimesng.com](http://www.premiumtimesng.com)).

The above reveals to us that selfishness is what perverts Nigerian Electoral process. Every candidate struggles to take advantage of the other so as to be elected. A closer look shows that this selfishness is not motivated by the desire to serve but the desire to be served and for self aggrandizement. Let us

also recall what happened in Anambra State in 2003. Anambrarians trooped out in great number to vote for the candidate of their choice then, Mr. Peter Obi of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA). But the INEC declared Mr. Chris Ngige of PDP as the winner. Mr. Obi rejected the outcome and went to court. It took a long judicial process to overturn the declaration. The tribunal declared Obi as the validly elected governor of Anambra state and voided the election of Ngige. Mr. Ngige appealed the judgment. By the time the court case were exhausted, Ngige had been in power for almost three years with only 20 months left for Obi to assume leadership of Anambra State as the elected governor of the state. Obi was eventually sworn in as the governor on March 15, 2006 with Dame Virgy Etiaba as his deputy. The battle was not yet over, the fraud that is noted in the Nigerian electoral process reared its ugly head again. Before Peter Obi could settle down for governance, he was impeached. Again, he rejected the purported impeachment and challenged it in court because those that impeached him were not up to two-third majority of the state House of Assembly and thus bridged Section 188(1-9) of the 1999 constitution of the Federation. Majority of the members of 30 members of the Anambra state house of assembly were solidly behind Mr. Peter Obi yet the small faction (12 members) claimed that he was validly impeached. Peter Obi was restored back to his seat on December 28th, 2006 after several court processes which actually culminated in the Supreme Court. The restoration of Mr. Obi led to the removal of Chuka Okoli as the chief judge of the state as he was suspended by the National Judicial Council (NJC).

Despite the fact that Peter Obi had not exhausted his four year term in office counting from the day he was sworn in March 15th 2006, to March 15th 2010, INEC who knows the contents of electoral act went ahead to conduct another election in April 2007 in Anambra state. Every condition was made possible so that Mr. Andy Ubah could emerge victorious. At the end of the day he was inaugurated as the Governor of Anambra State. Obi had to vacate the seat on May 29th, 2007 for Mr. Andy Ubah. But before then, Obi had gone to court for tenure interpretation and thus did not participate in the purported election. Following the Electoral Act, the Supreme Court restored Mr. Peter Obi to the position of the state governor and thus removing Mr. Andy Ubah as governor. The Supreme Court ruled that Obi should remain as governor until March 17, 2010 when his first term of four years as a democratically elected governor would lapse. As a result, the court ruled that Andy Ubah should vacate the seat for Peter Obi. The Apex court was too hard on the INEC for conducting election for an office that was not vacant. Hence, renders the election of Mr. Andy Ubah null and void. And since Nigerian Electoral Act does not envisage a governor in waiting, it therefore made it clear that if Andy Ubah will come back to that seat, he must stand for fresh election at the expiration of the tenure of Mr. Peter Obi (Agbaegbu, 2007:18-22). This is nothing but the politics of the 'survival of the fittest,' which is outside the dictates of democracy as practiced elsewhere. The implication is that when a candidate is not liked by the powers that be, he would be unjustly removed. Let us now compare the above with the election of Matthias in the Acts of the Apostles.

Exegesis of Acts 1:12-26

Out of the 27 books of the New Testament, Acts of the Apostles is the only historical book in it. Summarily, NT has Four Gospels, one Historical Book - the Acts of the Apostles, 21 books with Epistolary Format, and one Apocalypse - Book Revelation. Acts deals generally with the extension of the ministry of Christ in the world. It records the activities of the Apostles after the death of Christ, his eventual resurrection and ascension, especially what they were able to do after having been vivified by the Spirit of Christ. Acts as a book can broadly be divided into five sections namely (i) The spread of the Church in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3); (ii) The spread of the Church in Samaria (8:4-11:18); (iii) The spread of Church in and from Antioch (11:19-15:35); (iv) The spread of Church in Greece (15:36-19:20); (v) The spread of the Church from Jerusalem to Rome (21:15-28:31).

Acts 1:12-26 falls within the spreading of the Church in Jerusalem (1:1-8:3). This can further be broken down into fifteen major subsections namely (1) The prologue (1:1-5); (2) The ascension of Jesus (1:6-14); (3) The election of Matthias (1:15-26); (4) The descent of the Holy Spirit (2:1-41); (5) The first summary (2:42-47); (6) The healing of a lame man (3:1-4:22); (7) The community's prayer for the apostles (4:23-31); (8) The second summary (4:32-35); (9) The good example of Barnabas (4:36-37); (10) The bad example of Ananias and his wife (5:1-11); (11) The third summary (5:12-16); (12) The apostles before the Sanhedrin (5:17-42); (13) The choice of the seven deacons (6:1-7); (14) Stephen the deacon (6:8-7:60); (15) Persecution in Jerusalem (8:1-3) (Luke, 1994: 62-64). Our interest lies with subsection 3 which deals with the election of Matthias. This can further be broken into three main sections namely, (a) The Meeting that ushers in the Election (1:12-14); (b) Peter's

motivational speech (1:15-22); (c) Acceptance of the speech and subsequent election of Matthias (1:23-26).

Acts 1:12-26 has so many critical problems which ranges from alternative reading of word (Vv.12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26); alternative reading of words (Vv 13, 18); omissions (Vv. 14,19); and insertions (Vv. 14, 16, 18, 19, 23). It is clear from the above that practically each of the verses has one problem or the other. We shall refer to any of them as the need arises. But suffice it to know that despite all the dissenting voices as regards the authenticity of our text, majority of manuscripts and more ancient authorities support the acceptability of our text (Nestle-Alland, 1991: 321-322).

### **The Opening Meeting (1:12-14)**

Jesus has just been taken away from the believers and they returned back from the Mount of Olives and went straight to where they used to stay together even when Jesus was still around (1:12-13). This is contrary to what Luke himself reported in 24:52-53 where we are told that with great joy they returned from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem and were continually in the Temple praising/blessing God. No mention was made of the upper room. There is no way they could have been in the Temple because at this point in time they were still afraid of the Jews and could no longer moved about openly. If it were to be after the Pentecost, then Temple would have been possible. What is more plausible is the content of Acts 1:12-13 (they went to the upper room, cf. Luke 22:12). The Mount of Olives was just a Sabbath day's journey, i.e. a distance a devout Jew could walk without breaking the Sabbath day prescriptions (Exod. 6:29). There is no doubt that Peter has been worried along the road of the reduction they have in their number as they were returning back (huestrepsan).

Vv13-14 list those who were there at the upper room and they are: Peter the head of the apostolic team, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alphaeus<sup>1</sup>, Simon the zealot, Judas son of James<sup>2</sup>, as well as such people as Mary the mother of Jesus, some women and bothers of Jesus. The women most probably mentioned here are those already mentioned in Luke 8:1-3; 23:49; 23:55-56; 24:1-10,23. Though some other interpretation claim that the women present were the wives of the apostles with the exception of Mary mother of Christ (Luke 1:38, 45) and Mary Magdalene and their children. One will also be very surprised that at this upper room, members of Jesus' family were also there because they distanced from him when he was still active in his ministry on earth (Mark 3:21; John 7:5). Whatever being the case, they are now believers (1 Cor. 15:7) (Taylor, 2004: 1585). Luke's list of the apostles (Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13) corresponds to the lists of Twelve given in Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19) and what we have here though in different order. Mary's presence reveals two things, firstly, it shows that John has really started the work Jesus handed over to him to do (John 19:26-27) namely taking care of Mary, mother of Jesus; secondly, her presence made other women to be there as well as members of her household. The presence of Mary and other women as well as members of Jesus' family reveal their inner feelings or situations after the death and ascension of Jesus. Those that gathered in that upper room were about a hundred and twenty persons (v.15), including men and women. Here, "even if Luke is not thinking of ancient Israel's leaders of tens (Exod 18:12; 1Mac. 3:55), the tenfold structure of the apostolic assembly around its leaders recalls the relationship of the Twelve to the wider circle of disciples when they were first chosen (Luke 6:17). Luke must be demonstrating the continuation of the chosen twelve tribes" (Dillon, 1990: 729). The point of the author is that the upper room was filled to the brim (v13).

On the part of the apostles, what was very certain is that the apostles have accepted their position in the ministry of Christ. After the ascension, it was very clear to them that they had to carry on with the ministry from where Christ left it especially when Christ had promised them the gift of the advocate who would reveal every hidden thing to them and having promised to be with them forever (Matt. 28: 20). They came to realize that they were called to be apostles, which means that they have to see

<sup>1</sup>Our interest here is not whether James is the same thing as Levi, the tax collector, Jesus found in the house of the tax collectors or whether Levi is Matthew (Mark 2:14; Matt. 9:9) but suffice it to know that we have James and Matthew in the house.

<sup>2</sup>This list shows that there were two Judases among the apostles of Jesus, namely, Judas Iscariot and Judas son of James which corresponds to Thaddeus in the Matthew and Mark.

themselves as agents of Christ. Not just any agent but an agent that "becomes an extension of the personality and influence of the master" (Gen. 45:4-8; 1Kings 14:6) (Erwin, 2005: 116). So while they were waiting (katamenontes) for the coming of the Holy Spirit as was promised by Jesus; they saw the need of filling the space Judas left behind to follow his own fate. The lacuna he left behind was very glaring in the minds of the other apostles. They were originally twelve but now eleven in number, hence something has to be done.

The number twelve is not just ordinary, it is symbolic in the lives of Israelites, that is why they struggled to do something. It stands for perfection (generally used as a symbol of [the tribe of ] Israel); in some contexts in the book of Revelation, it refers to the Church [the twelve apostles; Rev. 21:12-14]). This number also reveals the basic function of the apostles namely, "ingathering of Israel which Jesus had begun and which their own number prophetically symbolized" (Dillon:730). The apostles after the ascension of Jesus, the imperfectness of their number became very glaring, thus they get themselves together in the upper room to perfect the imperfection. Hence, "Consistent with images of the kingdom, resurrection, and the coming of the Spirit - all intertwined with God's promise to restore Israel from its exile - is the need to reconstitute the Twelve. This would provide continuity not only with Jesus' mission in Luke's Gospel (6:13) but also with Israel's twelve tribes (Gen. 49; Exod. 24:4)" (Green, 2010: 738)"

This meeting did not just last for a day. It is not that Peter just stood up, talked and the whole thing was done immediately. There must have been prayerful search and agreements leading to the emergence of the two candidates namely, Joseph called Barsabbas (also called Justus) and Matthias. There has been speculations on how long and when, some scholars have argued that it "must have lasted for a week, for giving the fifty days from Passover to Pentecost, and subtracting Jesus' time in the tomb and the forty days of Acts 1:3, this meeting may have lasted close to a week. In Church tradition, it is ten days before Pentecost" (Craig, 1993: 325). The success of their gathering could be seen in the following words: proskarterountes which is a present participle, plural which comes from the Greek verb proskartereō meaning 'to be strong', 'to carry on,' 'to be steadfast.' This is a participle used in a periphrastic construction. Another word following it is homothumadon which means they were together with one mind or purpose. Finally, there is the word proseuchē which means in prayer. When we put these words together, we can rightfully say that the apostles with one mind steadfastly remained in prayer after the ascension (Rienecker, 1980: 264). The prayer was not just ordinary prayer said in few seconds, it must have been prayers said severally every day before the election, though, it may never have been uninterrupted prayers. The state they were abhors selfishness in all its ramification but were propelled by one intention, to perpetuate the ministry of Christ in the world.

### **Peter's Motivational Speech (1:15-22)**

The event we are about to explain happened between the ascension of Jesus and the descendant of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles. It is like a preparation in view of the task ahead (1:8). Peter as the head of the team (Luke 22:32; Matt 16:17-20), took over the floor and addressed his colleagues reminding them of the atrocity committed by Judas and ended with how he killed himself and cited a sort of ancient laws that ought to authorize them to replace Judas without breaking any known law or Scripture itself. (Howard, 2007: 529). His speech was intended to "fulfill the Scripture" (plērōthēnai tēn graphēn). He therefore quoted Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8. These Psalms he quoted are traditionally agreed to have been written by David (v.16). He emphasized that Judas had a (klēron diakonias) portion in their ministry. The implication is that he was previously ranked as an apostle but now he has rejected his rank, we, therefore, have to do the needful.

Verses 18-19 is like a little digression which explains clearly the situation of Judas that warrants his replacement. What we have here is very similar to what we have in Matt. 27:1-10 but with some divergent information. One may not necessarily call it contradictory information but should be understood from the point of view of a report of an event given by two different persons. What is most common in both stories is Judas' betrayal of Jesus and his eventual forfeiture of his official position. But what he (Judas) did with the proceeds of the crime and how he died eventually are differently reported by both accounts. Hence, Craig says, "these similarities and differences can be explained on the basis of two authors reporting different details and ancient historians' freedom on such detail" (Craig: 326). When one looks at the gruesome death of Judas in Matt. 27:5 it is comparable to the death of Herod Agrippa in Acts 12:23 (v.18) as well as the death of Amasa (2 Sam.

20:10); these are abominable deaths no doubt. This is because, each burst open in the middle and all their intestines spilled out (etcheō).

After quoting the authorities, he affirmed the implication, "his office let another take" (v.20). Let us note that the reference Peter made above came from the Septuagint. Peter, therefore, after having quoted the ancient authority, he went ahead to mention the criteria that qualify one to take the place of Judas. According to Peter, anyone that will replace Judas must be (1) a man chosen from among men (andrōn); (2) one who witnessed John's baptism of Jesus (baptismatos); (3) one who witnessed ascension (anelēmphthē); (4) and one who witnessed the resurrection (anastaseōs). Put simply, Judas would be replaced by a man who has been with the apostles from the beginning, witnessed the baptism, resurrection and finally, the ascension (v.22). This indicates the importance of eyewitness, for one witnesses well what one has seen and heard by oneself (1:8). One important question that is evitable to all those who bear witness is: were you there? This criteria, no doubt narrowed down the number of the contestants. Anyone who fulfils these conditions qualifies to replace Judas. Verse 22 shows us that the above criteria for the replacement of Judas also help to delimit Jesus' earthly ministry (from baptism to ascension). But why must Judas be replaced? Some scholars are of the view that he was replaced not really just because of his death but because of his defection (1:16, 25). He was like one who apostatized and left a big hole that needed to be filled. Hence, "Jewish people believed that Scripture 'had to be fulfilled' and that God was sovereign over the events of history. Greco-Roman writers used fate as a plot-moving device, but Luke sees history moving in accordance with God's revealed purposes in Scripture" (Craig: 326).

#### **Acceptance Of The Speech And Subsequent Election Of Matthias (1:23-26).**

Peter as the head had no favourite in his mind when he was giving the requirement for Judas' replacement but was only motivated by the desire to properly perfect the apostolic team for it to qualify to represent Christ in the world. In other words, his only desire was to return their number to the original twelve Jesus made them. He knew that there were many men who were eminently qualified to replace Judas but that has to be done with full consent of his colleagues. The decision has to be that of the whole community and never his alone. He therefore subjected his own will and desire to that of the entire community. There was no atom of autocracy in his voice. He never ordered them to select this or that but for them to prayerfully guided in their selection. Peter's speech was persuasive and motivational thus fulfilling what Christ said, "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers" (Luke 22:31-32). We know that Peter denied Christ (Matt. 26:69-74) but even at that, after all said and done, he still returned to perfect what Christ left behind in his hands. In V. 23, the disciples of Jesus collectively without any dissenting voice conducted what in Nigerian political terrain would be termed 'primary' election of candidates. The primary produced two candidates namely, Joseph known as Barsabbas Justus and Matthias. The word used for the 'primary election' here is estēsān which is an aorist from the verb istēmi meaning 'to set up,' or 'to nominate.' To nominate or set up does not imply that only an individual nominated or set up somebody to be a candidate. It means in our context that it was done through a consensus action and process. Having nominated the two candidates they prayed. This was captured with the Greek word, first aorist middle, participle 'proseuzamēnoi', a nominative plural, masculine gender from the word proseuchomai meaning "to pray." The content of their prayer includes reminding God that he is the only one that knows the heart and capability of every person. Let him consider the candidates that were presented to him and select one that would replace Judas Iscariot in apostleship and ministry for which all of them were called (vv24-25). The prayer, like the one in 4:24-30, carries the author's argument under a garnishment of venerable formulas, such as presenting God as the 'knower of all hearts' (cf. Acts 15:8) [Dillon: 730].

Verse 26 shows that God is the one who chooses through the indeterminate lot that was cast. The lot was often used to select people for special duties in the OT (1 Chron 24:7; 25:8). Jewish people used it because they believed in God's sovereignty. It was also used to decide other matters and as a form of divination in Greek circles (Jonah 1:7), though divination was abhorred at a point in the history of the Israelites (Craig: 326).

This verse is the casting (edōkan) of the lots (klērous). The word edōkan is third person plural, first aorist active indicative from the verb didōmi meaning "to give". Lot is similar to the present day lottery where outcome depends on chance. The only difference is that the chance of lot is determined by God who will be invited to take control of the lots. This method was chosen since God had forbidden practices of magic among his people (Deut. 10:11-13; 13; 1Sam. 28; 2Kings 21:6; 2Chron.

33:6). This method was used so as to ascertain God's choice as was ascertained in the past (Lev. 16:18; Neh. 11:1). "In this way, the intrusion of human desires could be bypassed in favour of ascertaining the divine will" (Green: 738-739). The lot as we saw it fell (epesen) on Matthias. The word epesen is third person singular, an aorist active indicative which comes from the Greek word, piptō "to fall." When the lot falls on Matthias he was immediately added to the eleven making the number to be twelve again. The Greek word employed here is sugkatapsēphisthē which is a third person singular, first aorist passive indicative from the verb sugkatapsēphizō here meaning "to be chosen by a vote, together with, then, to be added. The method employed by the Jews was to put the names written on stones into a vessel and shake it until one fell out" (Rienecker: 264-265). I have no doubt that that was the method used in the election of Matthias.

There is a process which led safely to the election of Matthias namely, articulation of required qualifications, the nomination of two candidates, prayer, and the casting of lots. This is really the only place where lot was used in the selection of a candidate for a function, for a divine function. Take for instance, the election of Stephen and companion in Acts 6:1-7. In this case, the process came thus: articulation of the required qualifications of the would be ones, prayer, and laying of hands. There is no reason given anywhere why the use of lot stopped. Joel inferred that "the coming of the Holy Spirit to empower and guide God's people (Acts 2) rendered recourse to lot-casting unnecessary" (Green: 739). Well what is uppermost is that the election of Matthias was very peaceful.

### **Application and Evaluation**

Nigeria has what it takes to conduct free and fair election in her Electoral Act but nepotism, tribalism, ethnocentrism, selfishness and the desire to own everything have thwarted and marred everything. Manipulations trail almost all strata of our election. The motivation of the electoral body like INEC is not really to organize a successful election. But to anoint the selected candidates of the ruling class. Election of Matthias exposes to us the flaws we have in our country's electoral system. To fulfill the will of God was upper most in the minds of Peter and the rest of the apostles. They had no particular interest on any candidate. Hence, they demanded for the best from God which he granted them in the person of Matthias, because they followed their well thought out guidelines.

### **Recommendations**

This paper makes the following recommendations that if put into practice, Nigeria would be better for it and they include:

- The apostles agreed that whoever that would replace Judas must be one who had been with them from the baptism of John to the ascension of Jesus. This shows that the person must be knowledgeable enough on the life, deeds and teachings of Jesus. In the same way, a Nigerian leader must be one who is at home with the geography and history of Nigeria so that he can understand the needs of every section so as to rule well.
- Secondly, the apostles prayed and election of Matthias was very successful. Nigeria should learn how to conduct national prayer a day before the general election for God to intervene and influence the electorate for the welfare of the entire nation.
- Thirdly, the standard of President Goodluck, Ebele Jonathan as portrayed by Joseph (known as Barsabbas Justus) should be the standard of everyone seeking elective position. Defeat should be willingly accepted without always going through the court.
- Selfishness should be abhorred by both the electoral body as well as electorate and those in government, so that Nigeria would be devoid of rancor and bitterness at the end of elections.
- We recommend the reading of Acts 1:12-26 before every election during the prayers that would usher in the election by all and sundry.

### **Conclusion**

Standard should be set for every election and it must be fulfilled. Just as the apostles had their standard and followed it. Nigeria has one of the most wonderful electoral act in the world; where the problem lies is on the implementation. The apostles were selfless, and their only interest was to fill the gap left by Judas with right candidate. Anytime Nigerians shun tribalism, ethnicity, and favouritism in electing national leaders and even State representatives and Local Government representatives, Nigeria would be better for it.

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