The first Law of Thermodynamics says that no mass or energy is ever destroyed, that it merely changes form. When a piece of wood is burned, it is not gone. Some of it becomes heat; some deteriorates into the ashes. But it is not destroyed - it just changes. When a lake dries up, the water is gone. It has evaporated into the air, only to fall to earth again someday.

If we can see this all around us in the physical world, is it so hard to conceive of it in the spiritual world? Harry Emerson Fosdick said, "Can it be that God is the most unscrupulous waster in the universe, making great personalities, only to throw them utterly away."

**Humor:**
New England high school teacher taught a course entitled The Bible as Literature. Only seniors in the top 10 percent of the class could take this course. A pre-test was given to evaluate the students’ biblical knowledge. One student defined the Epistles as "wives of the Apostles." A pastor was so humored by this answer that he shared it during his next sermon. One of the church members approached him afterwards and asked, "If the Epistles weren’t the wives of the Apostles, whose wives were they?"
Illustration:
For Pete's sake
The names of Jesus' apostles have become the most common names for males in the Western world. How many do you know named John, Pete, Tom, Andy, Jim, Bart, or Phil?

Foundation

Ephesians 2:20
having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

Romans 15:20
And thus I aspired to preach the gospel, not where Christ was already named, so that I would not build on another man's foundation;

1 Corinthians 3:10
According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. 11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

1 Timothy 6:19
storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

2 Timothy 2:19
Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are His," and, "Everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness."

**Hebrews 6:1**
Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

**Hebrews 11:10**
for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

**Revelation 21:14**
And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

**Apostles** (652) (apostolos [word study]) from apo = from + stello = send forth) means one sent forth from by another, often with a special commission to represent another and to accomplish his work. It can be a delegate, commissioner, ambassador sent out on a mission or orders or commission and with the authority of the one who sent him.

**Apostolos** referred to someone who was officially commissioned to a position or task, such as an envoy. Cargo ships were sometimes called apostolic, because they were dispatched with a specific shipment for a specific destination. In secular Greek apostolos was used of an admiral of a fleet sent out by the king on special assignment.

In the ancient world an apostle was the personal representatives of the king, functioning as an ambassador with the king’s authority and provided with credentials to prove he was the king's envoy.
12 guys who ended well
Chosen of God
Workers
Servants
Teachers
Stayed on message
Foundational
At Pentecost

1. We are a family built on a foundation.
2. These 12 men were in agreement.
3. These 12 men fought well.
4. These 12 men finished well.
5. “I never said it would be easy. I only said it would be worth it.”
6. Their eyewitness testimony is the basis of our faith.
7. Their teaching is the basis of our doctrine and practice.
8. They were commanded to make disciples of all the nations.

From sources outside the Bible, we are told:
Into All the World
Reports and legends abound and they are not always reliable, but it is safe to say that the apostles went far and wide as heralds of the message of the risen Christ. They suffered greatly for their faith and in most cases met violent deaths on account of their bold witness.

**PETER and PAUL** were both martyred in Rome about 66 AD, during the persecution under Emperor Nero. Paul was beheaded. Peter was crucified, upside down at his request, since he did not feel he was worthy to die in the same manner as his Lord.

**ANDREW** went to the "land of the man-eaters," in what is now the Soviet Union. [Christians](#) there claim him as the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified.

"Doubting" THOMAS was probably most active in the area east of Syria. Tradition has him preaching as far east as India, where the ancient Marthoma Christians revere him as their founder. They claim that he died there when pierced through with the spears of four soldiers.

**PHILIP** possibly had a powerful ministry in Carthage in North Africa and then in Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation the proconsul had Philip arrested and cruelly put to death.

**MATTHEW** the tax collector and writer of a Gospel, ministered in Persia and Ethiopia. Some of the oldest reports say he was not martyred, while others say he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia.

**BARTHOLOMEW** had widespread missionary travels attributed to him by tradition: to India with Thomas, back to Armenia, and also...
to Ethiopia and Southern Arabia. There are various accounts of how he met his death as a martyr for the gospel.

**JAMES** the son of Alpheus, is one of at least three James referred to in the New Testament. There is some confusion as to which is which, but this James is reckoned to have ministered in Syria. The Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death.

**SIMON THE ZEALOT**, so the story goes, ministered in Persia and was killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god.

**MATTHIAS** was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning.

**JOHN** is the only one of the company generally thought to have died a natural death from old age. He was the leader of the church in the Ephesus area. During Domitian's persecution in the middle 90's, he was exiled to the island of Patmos. There he is credited with writing the last book of the New Testament--the Revelation.

-- While much of the above is not known for sure, it does seem to coincide with Paul's statements concerning the spread of the gospel – Romans 10:14-18; Colossians 1:23

**Romans 10:14-18**

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:
“How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace,
   Who bring glad tidings of good things!”

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “LORD, who has believed our report?” 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

Colossians 1:23
23 if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Matthew 10:1-7
And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 Simon the Cananite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’
I. Handpicked by Jesus

A. Carriers of a message that changed the world.

B. Common laborers

   1. Outside the current school of thought

      a. philosophically

      b. politically

      c. religiously

Humor: Letter to Heaven

A little boy wanted 100 dollars badly and prayed for two weeks but nothing happened. Then he decided to write a letter to the Lord requesting the money. When the postal authorities received the letter addressed to the Lord, they decided to send it to the President.

The President was so impressed, touched, and amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a 10 dollar bill. The President thought this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy. The little boy was delighted with the money and sat down to write a thank-you note to the Lord, which read:

   Dear Lord, Thank you very much for sending me the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you had to send it through Washington, and as usual, they deducted 90%.

   Love, Tommy

   http://jokes.christiansunite.com/Politics/Letter_to_Heaven.shtml

II. Assigned an impossible mission by the world’s standards

A. Lacked social status
b. Lacked organization-support
C. Lacked wealth, their own or that of wealthy backers

III. Considered guilty by association

Are you one of them?

A. Their leader
   1. Born in poverty
   2. Spent most of His years in obscurity
   3. Never had any position in life
   4. Never wrote a book
   5. Lived only 33 years
   6. Died on a cross between two thieves

IV. Called Men

A. Not because of what they were in themselves, but what they could be under His mighty working power.

II Cor. 5:17
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.
IF CHRIST COULD USE THE BEST OF MEN WHO WERE ONLY MEN, AT THEIR BEST, THEN HE CAN USE US.

Mark 3:13
And He went up on the mountain and called to Him those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him.

John 6:70
Jesus answered them, “Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?”

Illustrations:

• As a potter looks at clay
• As a sculptor looks at stone
• As a carver looks at wood

John 2:24-25
But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

Matt. 4:19
Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

THERE ARE NO SELF-MADE CHRISTIANS IN HIS SERVICE. THEY ARE ALL GOD-MADE.
**Matt. 11:29**
Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

AS DID THOSE HE GATHERED AROUND HIM IN THE DAYS OF HIS FLESH, DISCIPLES TODAY BEGIN THEIR APPRENTICESHIP BY LEARNING FROM HIM AS WELL.

**V. Chosen after a night of prayer**

**Luke 6:12-13**
Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles:

*Can we say that all our decisions in life are preceded by intense and prolonged prayer for guidance?*

**VI. Limited to Twelve**

**Matt. 10:1**
And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.
**Matt. 10:5**
These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans.

**Matt. 11:1**
Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

**Matt. 20:17**
Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them,

**Matt. 26:20**
When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve.

**Mark 3:14**
Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach,

**Mark 11:11**
And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

Twelve in the Bible is the number of government.

It is a clear illustration to the 12 tribes of Israel of a new nation, a peculiar people. The church is a new nation and the apostles are the foundation.
Unleart, though wise in things that mattered most,
   Those men of God were valiant midst a host,
And proved that they had been with Him who died,
   And for the sinful world was crucified,
And by that nearness had a wisdom vast,
That proved sufficient for their handsome task.
For they had been with Jesus, heard Him speak,
   Knew of His worth and of His manner meek;
But knew beneath it all He was of God,
   And following where their risen Master trod
Were versed in knowledge, not of earth-taught men,
   Nor written yet by men’s God guided pen.

J.P.S. Strickland

A. Twelve typical men
   1. Peter ... man of action
      bold, impulsive, eager
   2. John ... man of prayer
      quiet, contemplative, loving
   3. Bartholomew or Nathaniel ... believing soul, ever ready to confess Christ
   4. Thomas ... skeptical and slow to accept the witness of others
   5. Matthew ... a publican or tax gatherer, a servant of the Roman government
   6. Simon ... a zealot, a rebel against Rome whose sword was drawn against it and who hated its taxes.

B. Kept their individuality
1. They were not carbon copies of one another.
2. They were not all “yes” men.

C. God loves variety.

1. Look at nature:
   - Trees, flowers, dogs, landscape

D. Apply this to the church.

1. The church is made up of typical people.
2. They are not carbon copies of one another.
3. The call to salvation comes a variety of ways.

*WE COME TOGETHER TO STUDY, LEARN, AND FELLOWSHIP, BUT OUR PURPOSE FOR LIVING IS TO BE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD AND THE SALT OF THE EARTH.*

E. Still impacting our world

1. Names of the apostles used by Americans in 1950:
   - John - 5,837,000
   - James - 2,998,000
   - Thomas – 1,910,000
   - Paul – 361,000
   - Andrew – 342,000
Illustration: Choices

The George Foreman Grill Story

Former heavyweight boxing champion George Foreman writes:

A business friend came to me with an offer. He said, "George, you’ve helped other companies by advertising their products. Have you ever thought about having your own product?" Later he sent me a small, slanted grill and asked me to try it out.

I got busy with other things and forgot about it. A couple of months later, he called. "George, how do you like the grill?"

"Oh, the grill. To be honest, I haven’t tried it yet. Let me get back with you on that."

After hanging up, I almost made one of the worst financial decisions I could ever make. I thought, I really don’t have time for this.

Fortunately, Mary changed my mind. "George, I’ve tried the grill and I like it a lot. The grease rolls right off and the food tastes really good."

"Are you serious?"

"Yeah," she replied. "I’ll fix you a burger."

After taking a bite, I said, "Yeah, it is really good. And the grill is easy to clean up. I like this grill!"

I wasn’t thinking about making any money on the deal. I just signed the contract so I could get sixteen free grills for my
homes, friends, and family members. I never dreamed this opportunity would turn into a grilling empire!

