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## The Apostles as “Ordinary Men” (Church Tradition)

Early church tradition often made much of the ordinary stature of the men whom Jesus called to be his twelve disciples and of their subsequent contributions to the transforming events that would establish Christianity as one of the empire’s foremost religions.

**Origen** (185–ca. 254):

Now we can see how in a short time this religion has grown up, making progress through the persecution and death of its adherents and through their endurance of confiscation of property and every kind of bodily torture.

And this is particularly remarkable since the teachers themselves were neither very skillful nor very numerous. For in spite of all, this word is being “preached in all the world” (Matt. 24:14), so that Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish now are adopting the Christian religion.

Hence there can be no doubt that it is not be human strength or resources that the word of Christ comes to prevail with all authority and convincing power in the minds and hearts of all humanity.<sup>1</sup>

**Eusebius** (263–339):

Reflect on the nature and grandeur of the one Almighty God who could associate himself with the poor and lowly fisherman’s

class. To use them to carry out God's mission baffles all rationality.

For having conceived the intention, which no one ever before had done, of spreading his own commands and teachings to all nations, and of revealing himself as the teacher of the religion of the one Almighty God to all humanity, he thought good to use the most unsophisticated and common people as ministers of his own design.

Maybe God just wanted to work in the most unlikely way. For how could inarticulate folk be made able to teach, even if they were appointed teachers to only one person, much less to a multitude? How should those who were themselves without education instruct the nations? <sup>2</sup>

1. Origen, *First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (London: SPCK, 1936), 4:1.2.
2. Eusebius, *The Proof of the Gospel*, trans. W. J. Ferrar (London: SPCK, 1920), 3–5.



