Lesson 10 · The Early Apostles

Scope

- AD 30–49 · Acts 1–15, James, Matthew
- Pentecost and the Jerusalem Church · AD 30–33
- The Gospel Reaches Samaria and the Gentiles · AD 33–44
- Paul's First Journey · AD 44–49

Before & after

- Previous: God's promise is greater than “sin and death”
- **This lesson: God's promise is greater than “all persecution”**
- Next: God's promise “goes to all nations”

Discussion

- On the day of Pentecost, Peter began his sermon with the book of Joel (Acts 2:16). Why did preaching the gospel to a Jewish audience start from the Old Testament? When we share the gospel with different people, where should we start?
- Gamaliel said, “If it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them.” Is that a comfort or a warning for the church today?
- The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) removed the requirement of circumcision for Gentiles. Do we also, without meaning to, add “extra conditions” to the gospel?

Main sentence

God's promise is greater than “all persecution”

Person

Peter

Key verse

Acts 4:12

And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Five key events

1 · Pentecost

- The Holy Spirit comes and the disciples speak in other tongues
- Peter preaches the first sermon and 3,000 are baptized
- The church is born: meeting daily in the temple, breaking bread, sharing all things in common

2 · Stephen and the Scattering

- Stephen becomes the first martyr, with the young Saul standing by in approval
- A great persecution scatters the disciples through Judea and Samaria, and the gospel spreads all the more
- Philip baptizes the Ethiopian eunuch

3 · Saul's Conversion

Saul, persecutor of the church, meets the risen Jesus on the Damascus road and becomes Paul, apostle to the Gentiles

4 · Cornelius: The Door to the Gentiles

- Peter sees a vision in Joppa and goes to Caesarea to preach to the household of Cornelius, a Roman centurion
- The Holy Spirit falls on the Gentiles
- In Antioch the disciples are first called “Christians.”

5 · First Journey and Jerusalem Council

- Barnabas and Paul travel through Cyprus and Galatia, and many Gentiles believe
- The Jerusalem Council rules that Gentiles need not be circumcised
- The gospel breaks free of the shell of Judaism