



GC Question Sheet

Scripture: Acts 6:8 – 8:3

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matt. 5:10-11). Consider how the story of Stephen (and earlier accounts of the Apostle's persecutions) are Jesus' words lived-out.

Consider the recurring theme in Stephen's testimony of *family* rejecting God's sent one played out in the lives of the following people below, and consider how in your own life, you share the depths of depravity with the family members who rejected God's Sent One.

- Joseph
- Moses
- Jesus
- Stephen

Stephen knew the story of God, not just as a narrative, but as an integrated story centered on God's redemptive plan and power for humanity. Consider how his deep understanding of God's story, along with an active relationship with the Holy Spirit were the foundation of his deep relationship with God, and how he chose to live. How does this provide encouragement for you in how you approach your Bible study and prayer life?

In his defense, Stephen seemed to intentionally emphasize God's actions repeatedly happening outside of the land of Canaan and the temple - from the very beginning of Israel's history. Consider how in our own lives, you attempt to put God in a box rather than letting Him be Lord of all.

Stephen lived like Jesus lived and died like Jesus died. In Romans 12:1, Paul encourages ALL believers to live that way (offer our bodies as living sacrifices *in view of* God's mercy). Consider how in your own life, the Spirit is convicting you to live like Jesus and DAILY die to self at the following levels:

- Heart – “not my will, but yours, be done.” Luke 22:42; Matt. 26:42
- Household – serving family with a self-sacrificing love
- Neighbors/coworkers, etc – giving your time and energy even (especially) when it is hard
- Church family – sacrificially giving time, resources and Spiritual gifts to the church and it's mission to make disciples who make disciples and plant churches that plant churches.