

YOU ARE THERE

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

CHRIST B: SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTION NOTES

As mentioned elsewhere, these notes are not the “answer key.” They are suggestions for where the discussion questions in this book can go, but feel free to go in entirely different directions. (In fact, feel free to introduce other questions.) The notes below are deliberately brief, so as to provide suggestions and pointers, but not “official” answers. In some cases, there are follow-up questions that you might add to the discussion.

1. MARTHA & MARY

1. Martha is doing a good thing. Is she doing the best thing? That’s not as clear. They would have gotten something to eat eventually. (And Jesus addressed her worry, not her actions.)
2. a. He’s telling her that spiritual concerns are much more important than material concerns. (But both should be dealt with.)
b. Various answers. Prioritize wisely.
3. a-b. Not a simple answer. Nice things are good for keeping you mindful of God’s glory and your respect for Him, but not if done to impress (rather than to help worship).
1 Timothy 2:9 describes “proper clothing” (not just during worship); it’s addressed to women, but similar principles apply to men.
c. Helping those in need, helping spread the word. (But you can’t spend all your money on that.)

2. MARY, MARTHA & LAZARUS

1. a. No.
b. Not the most reasonable thing from my viewpoint, but I’m not God and don’t have His perspective. He does what He thinks best, and doesn’t restrict Himself to my opinion of what He should do. And He lets things happen, without keeping everyone safe and healthy.
2. Love Him as family; respect His opinion and teaching; don’t keep Him out of your life; etc.
3. Similar to (2). Share with Him; try to be like Him; act like He’s with you; etc.

3. ZACCHEUS

1. Perhaps: the relative importance of material and spiritual goods; how money (esp. love of money) can interfere between me and God; good and bad ways to treat people; the need to be honest even when no-one else (on Earth) knows what you’re doing; etc.
2. We don’t know for sure, but it seems that money is a greater obstacle for the rich ruler than for Zaccheus. God requires me (not my money), but I’ve got to make sure any money I have isn’t keeping me from Him.
3. You should get rid of anything keeping you from God; of anything that’s more important to you than God.

4. JOHN

1. a. They’ll have to deal with troubles and persecution similar to what He’s facing.
b. I hope so, but don’t accept an easy “yes”. What Jesus suffered, what the apostles suffered — many good people since that time have turned from God rather than suffer similar persecution. Help them realize they will need to be strong at times in their lives to stay with God.

2. This isn’t the baptism for forgiveness of sins; it is the punishment of the cross. (See Luke 12:50.) The images in (1) and (2) are very similar. We have not yet been “baptized” this way, but we may face it in the future.
3. Make their welfare more important than yours (especially make their spiritual welfare more important than your physical welfare); don’t insist on getting your way; don’t place obstacles between them and God; etc.

5. A HERODIAN

1. a. This is probably a hard question, especially for younger students. You’ll probably have to suggest some of all of the answer. Possibilities include taxes paid to support sinful activity (we’ll let you decide which government activities are sinful); laws which approve sinful actions (such as abortions); prohibitions against telling people about God; etc.
b. Having supplied answers to (a), let’s hope the class can discuss what to do (change laws, respectfully violate the law, etc.)
2. a. There may be times, but bottom line is that if it isn’t addressed by God’s law, then it isn’t a sin. (Be aware that some of God’s simple instruction (e.g., “don’t lie”) prohibit a wide variety of sins of deceit.)
b. First, study to determine if obeying the questionable law is actually a sin. If it is, take the same actions listed in 1.b.
3. In general, yes. There may be times that you must violate civil law to obey God, but be very sure that it is necessary (otherwise you’re violating both civil and God’s law).

6. A WIDOW

1. We don’t know. It looks like she has faith that God will provide (more than most people).
2. a. In a sense we should give God everything: everything we own should be available to God. And in general, we should give God more than most people do.
b. It’s responsible to not be a burden to others if you can avoid it. It doesn’t do much good to give everything you have to God, and then need to get food from other people. But it’s also good to place our trust in God.
3. Various answers; just make sure they’ve taken time to consider the question. What material goods you give is the secondary question; whether you’ve given yourself is the most important consideration.

7. MATTHEW

1. a. Christ’s body. His body was broken & the bread is broken.
b. We share in his sacrifice, showing that we are willing to accept what He has done for us.
2. a. The blood that poured out from His body. Both are deep red.
b. Wine/grape juice can be used to seal an agreement or contract in New Testament times; here, it symbolizes the covenant agreement Christ has with all Christians.
3. a. We want to proclaim the grace, power, mercy, love, etc. of Christ’s sacrifice for us.
b. By openly participating, especially by eating (not just saying something), we declare our allegiance to Christ and acceptance of His sacrifice.

8. JUDAS

1. a. By not defending Him when people are blaspheming and belittling Him; by openly opposing Him, in word or deed ... by sinning against Him.
b. Actively repenting; actively continuing in your sin; doing nothing; killing yourself in remorse. You might not do the right thing if you are afraid, stubborn, lazy, wanting not to be different, etc.
2. a. Get as close to Jesus as possible (with study, prayer, etc.); be close to good role models, so you can follow their examples; be aware of your value to Christ, so you doubt yourself less when the time comes; role-play possible situations, so you can respond correctly when they happen.
b. Rely on (a); acknowledge your sin, repent of it, and move on (learning what lessons you can from it).
3. Probably not. It strengthens my faith that God (who gave Zechariah the words to write) knew those specific details — 30 pieces of silver, which is the value placed on Jesus, thrown into the Temple, ending up in the potter's pocket (when the chief priests bought the field from him) — 500 years earlier.

9. CAIAPHAS

1. a. Help them understand the difference between what I like best and what is best for all of us (even if not best for me). Hiding a problem doesn't get rid of the problem for long.
b. Be sure they are considering realistic situations where this might happen — watching a movie or attending an event that Christ probably wouldn't approve of; indulging in behavior that is okay only because "he started it", etc.
2. a. More situations where you are expected to sin; in particular, where those who selected you to lead them expect you to lead the sin.
b. It's tough ... you're trying to influence those you lead, while keeping them from choosing another leader. Make sure answers to this question don't cross the line of (1).
3. Being a visible example; the opportunity to influence decisions.

10. PILATE

1. Possible answers include: Our current compromise on abortion allows abortion only through the first 3 months; some drug laws allow a limited amount of drug use; what homosexual behavior is accepted, and what isn't; etc.
2. Clearly, a religion that advocates killing other people should be limited. But what about a religion that advocates aggressive recruitment of others — would you want anyone to be able to teach your child about another religion? Should there be a law preventing people from teaching religion to other people's children? (Make sure they realize the implications for common Bible classes.)
3. Government is appointed by God to look after us and punish evil. It is responsible to submit to God; it is responsible to lead us and protect us.

11. THE CENTURION

- 1 – 2. Various answers. Make sure the Bible's internal consistency and internal accuracy are included.
3. The truth; hallucinations; space aliens; time travelers; magicians. Which explanation is most likely?

12. MARY MAGDALENE

1. A very few people might have put it all together. But when you see someone die, you need to see that person living again before you can really accept that his resurrection is possible.
2. a. Yes. But you've got to *do* it, not just want it.
b. Both more free (from sin and all its baggage) and more restricted (from sin and its many attractions). Be aware that sin is very attractive.
3. He has literally made her free (from her demons) and shown her the wonder of a life of love. Our own love must be based on our own awareness of what He's done for each of us. Show with obedience, returned love, joy, etc.

13. THOMAS

1. a. I'd want to believe, but it might simply be too hard for me. Remind them that we have much more written evidence than Thomas had.
b. It'd be hard not to believe given the evidence that Jesus gave Thomas.
2. a. Some historical record (Josephus & others); Bible's internal consistency (which embraces Jesus on earth); fulfilled prophecy (which also embraces Jesus); record of "early church fathers"; the wonder of the natural world
b. Whichever parts of (a) that work for the student
3. Not until He comes again.