Questions for Chapters 3, 4, 5 for Discussion—Brides of Eden

Ch 3

1. Eva points out that the group is made up almost entirely of women. Why? There is one reason that is put forward by Mr. Berry, but might Joshua have other reasons for having more women in his group? What makes you think this? Cite evidence.
2. What does the following mean and who says it? What is the context (in other words, what preceded this comment?) (see pg 23, top of page)

“We’ve always relied on our womenfolk to bear the standard, shall we say, for our spiritual lives.”

1. What stories has Papa heard about Joshua? Cite examples.
2. The meetings that Joshua held at the old Territorial Meeting Hall on Main Street were the talk of the town. Why?
3. The Lifton Criteria for destructive leaders/groups includes isolating members from the larger community and making membership in the group seem sacred so that members feel special. What examples of this kind you find in chapter 3?

Ch 4

1. Joshua and the group go to Smith Island. Why do they go? Tell how this movement from town to the island relates to the Lifton Criteria for destructive leaders and groups.
2. What kinds of changes does Joshua bring about for the followers on Smith Island—food, dress, worship of God and of the leader?

Ch 5

1. Why did Joshua refuse to perform the wedding ceremony for Mollie and Frank? Explain. Cite information.
2. The married women in the group were especially disturbed by Joshua’s comments on marriage. What was Joshua’s suggestion about what they should do to be closer to God?
3. Hattie has to leave the group. Tell how this came about and how it ended. How did the narrator feel about the outcome? Cite.
4. Joshua says he has a message from God about a “mother of the Second Christ;” describe this revelation and how the members responded to it. Cite.
5. Joshua tells the crowd that he has been chosen to deliver the “holy spirit.” What do you think this is? Tell why you think it. What power might this give Joshua over the group?
6. According to Eva, who are the candidates for Holy Mother and what are their strengths and weaknesses? Cite.
7. Joshua wants to meet each of the women separately. What is he doing? How do you know? Explain and cite.
8. Esther tells Eva that she is thinking of reporting her to Joshua. For what?
9. When Eva goes to Joshua’s tent, what does she think he might talk to her about? Cite.
10. What happens to Eva when she visits Joshua? Explain and cite.