



# THE GOSPEL *of* ST. JOHN

REVISITING THE VISION OF  
**RUDOLF STEINER**  
FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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*Our Participation in Earth's Evolution  
as the Planet of Love*

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*Book 1 in the Simply Steiner™ Series*

**Book Club Questions for  
Book 1, *Steiner on The Gospel of St. John*  
Chapters 1-30**

The 1960s—whether you lived through that era directly or simply learned about it historically—had elements of the evolution of this planet towards Love that Steiner talks about. It was a decade of revolution calling for change in politics, music, and society around the world.

- What *are* those elements, from your perspective?
- How did they show themselves, and what kinds of results came from them?
- What from that era is worth keeping and bringing into our own consciousness and ways of organizing the culture at this time?



**Questions keyed to Chapter 1:  
Penetrating the Spiritual World Behind the Sense World**

1. How can we penetrate the spiritual world behind the sense world? What are our forces of spiritual perception? How does the Gospel of St. John illuminate this for us?
  
2. How can we reach the creative forces and beings of the universe through our own cognition? What does this suggest about our development?



**Questions keyed to Chapter 2:  
The Role of the Gospel of St. John  
in Accomplishing Humanity's Urgent Present-Day Task**

1. What does the Gospel of St. John tell us about the tasks lying immediately ahead of us?
2. What are the mysteries that lie hidden behind the physical life, which have been described in the Gospel of St. John?
3. How can we have an *inner experience* of the Gospel of St. John and be transformed by the reading? How can we penetrate into its spiritual foundations?
4. In what ways has spiritual power been used for material ends, both in Steiner's time and in our own? How can the message of this book shift this?
5. What prevents materialistically imbued theologians from understand or accurately estimating the Gospel of St. John (even the Prologue)?

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 3:  
The Logos**

1. Why is it not sufficient to seek to understand the Logos intellectually? What is gained by also bringing in the feelings of our hearts and souls? What is the difference between observing on a purely mental level and observing with the feelings of our hearts and souls?

[Keyed to ms. page 15]

2. Why did Jesus have to come to earth in human form? How did this affect the evolution of human consciousness?

[Keyed to ms. page 16]

3. What is the distinction between saying “I AM” vs. “God Is”? What does this say about the human relationship to God?

[Keyed to ms. page 16]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 4:  
The Evolution of the Human Being and of the Earth**

1. What is the relation between our connection to the divine and human evolution, as well as to the evolution of the earth?

[Keyed to ms. page 19]

2. What does Steiner say about human evolution in terms of the four-part bodies (physical, ego, etheric, astral) during sleep? Is this a generally understood aspect of human-evolutionary knowledge, or a new awareness? How might this awareness affect our understanding of our evolution?

[Keyed to ms. page 19]

3. What can be understood about the connection between human and the earth’s evolution and incarnations, especially the assertion that “in a certain sense, we may call the earth evolution the evolution of the ‘I AM,’ the evolution of the self-consciousness”? Does this perspective change how we have tended to view such evolution?

[Keyed to ms. page 19, 21]

4. The Lemurian period was humanity’s first time in a physical body.

- What was different for humans in that epoch than we are used to now?
- Does any remnant of that period still remain in human perception? For example, the level of immediate perception and

interaction with nature? What might be the benefits of this kind of relationship?

- What might it have been like to perceive the spirit world at night in a genuinely meaningful way? To have nightly clairvoyant images?
- Is there anything from this earlier evolution that might be worth taking back into our capacities, to any degree—both personally and collectively?

[Keyed to ms. page 20]

5. The period of Atlantis is said to developed strong magical powers. Have the abilities behind these powers (such as clairvoyance) persisted in some form, or have they been replaced by other things? If so, what?

[Keyed to ms. page 20]

6. Our present evolutionary existence is a state of consciousness possessed only from waking until going to sleep; unlike the Lemurians, we cannot observe what happens in sleep, on the astral plane. What may be the benefits of this shift to our present state of consciousness? What may be some losses?

[Keyed to ms. pages 20-22]

7. If evolution has brought us closer to being able to say of ourselves and our relation to the divine spiritual consciousness, "I AM," what was the human relationship to God prior to the first physical incarnation?

[Keyed to ms. page 22]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 5:  
The Real Meaning of the Logos (or Word)  
and the Evolution of the Human Capacity for Love**

1. What would we need to understand, as well as to become, in order to envision earth as the cosmos of Love? What would we need to understand and to do to be part of this evolution?

[Keyed to ms. pages 26-27]

2. What needs to take place within us in order to observe all the creatures of nature with the forces of our heart and soul? How might we interpret the bandwidth of “creatures of nature”? How might this perspective be different from our regular observations of nature’s creatures? How might it change our understanding of who we are as human beings?

[Keyed to ms. page 27]

3. “In order to love,” Steiner tells us, “the human must be in possession of his full self-consciousness, so that he can be wholly independent. To this end, the human being had to become an ego-being. The ego had to be implanted in the threefold human body—physical, etheric, astral—so that the earth might, through mankind, fulfill its mission of Love.... For one person to love another, he must be in possession of his full self-consciousness. Only one who is independent, one who is not bound to the other person, can love him. To this end, the human being had to become an ego-being.”

This quote from Steiner suggests that love is not simply a feeling, but that it means that we must have full self-consciousness so that we can be “wholly independent.”

What does this mean to you? What are we to be conscious *of*? What are we to be independent *from*? What do you see as the connection between the ego and such self-consciousness and independence? And what is your sense of what Steiner means by “ego,” here, in contrast to the usual definition of ego?

[Keyed to ms. page 28]

4. Does the assertion that our modern materialistic world came about through fear and anxiety ring true? What was/is the fear and anxiety about? How does it prevent people from fearlessly descending “into the

inner depths of their beings”? If we chose to make this descent, how might we do so? And what might be the benefits?

[Keyed to ms. page 32]

5. What are we to make of the (perhaps startling) assertion that the external physical body of the Logos appears inside the outer sunlight, but that the *spirit* of the sun (the sun-spirit) streams down upon the earth as Love? How shall we receive the assertion that the reason for human existence is to take into ourselves the warm Love of the Divine, develop it, and return it to the Divine? How might we “develop” it?

[Keyed to ms. page 33]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 6:  
The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us:  
“I Am the Light of the World**

1. As a culture, we have not been raised on the view that the Logos, or Christ, incarnated into physical form on the earth for the first time what previously had only been present in the sunlight. What is it like to contemplate this as a reality, this tying together of (a) the embodied Logos through Christ Jesus, and (b) the light of the sun? How could this open human understanding in light of human and earthly evolution?

[Keyed to ms. page 35]

2. Does the instruction by the writer of the Gospel of St. John not to view Christ Jesus as the “supersensible ever invisible being only one,” but as the embodiment of the Logos tell us something essential about who *we* are? What are the resonances and ramifications of this—for ourselves, for the world?

[Keyed to ms. page 35]

3. What does it mean to interpret “I am the Light of the world” literally? How is this different from a more traditional interpretation? What—considering the narrative arc of Steiner’s text—does this open us to?

[Keyed to ms. page 36]

4. What was so crucial about Christ Jesus having to incarnate in the flesh, in terms of the evolution of the human relationship to God? What was the distinction between the more group-soul understanding of God, and the “I AM”? And how does free will emerge out of this? What does this suggest in terms of humanity’s spiritual becoming?

[Keyed to ms. page 37]

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### Questions keyed to Chapter 7: John the Baptist

1. How does the assertion that the persecution of Jesus began within the *esoteric cadre*, rather than outer religious and social power plays, reframe or rewrite your sense of the meaning of Jesus’s life, persecution, crucifixion? Based on what’s in Steiner’s text, what may have been Jesus’ reasons for making the ancient mysteries public? Was there a connection to the evolution of humanity and the earth towards Love?

[Keyed to ms. pages 41-42]

2. What is suggested by the assertion, “They who trusted in *His* name were not born of the blood, or of the flesh, or of the will of man—but of God”? What is the difference? And how did this trust come about?

[Keyed to ms. page 42]

3. Over 100 years ago, Steiner declared that the materialistic culture was on its way to a close. While that did not seem to happen within his predicted time frame, was he right? Is the culture changing in that

direction now? If so, what evidence (already in sight, or in process) supports this view?

[Keyed to ms. page 43]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 8:  
The Transition from the Old Testament to the New**

1.  
What took place in humans as they evolved out of the identification with the group-soul? What about those people whose conception of the individual ego spread further?

[Keyed to ms. page 48]

2.  
What kind of memory existed in human beings prior to the development of the individual-personality ego, during the time of the group soul? How did this change with the incarnation of Christ-Jesus?

[Keyed to ms. page 48]

3.  
What is the essence of the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament? How is this represented by John the Baptist's statement, "I am one calling in solitude"?

[Keyed to ms. page 49]

4.  
What is meant by Christ-Jesus' saying, "I am the Light of the World"?

[Keyed to ms. pages 49-50 ]

**Questions keyed to Chapter 9:  
For of His Fullness We Have All Received Grace Upon Grace**

1.  
What is the connection between the Light and the human ego? Why was the ego essential?

[Keyed to ms. page 54]

2.  
What was the difference between “Children of God” and the majority of humankind?

[Keyed to ms. pages 54-55]

3.  
Why did the Christ have to appear on earth in a way that made it possible for Him to be seen with physical eyes?

[Keyed to ms. page 55]

4.  
What is the difference between those who were “once born” and those who were “twice born”?

[Keyed to ms. page 55]

5.  
Why do the mysteries of Christianity teach the seeker to “behold the Christ, to fill himself with the power of His image; to seek to become like Him, and to follow after Him”?

[Keyed to ms. page 56]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 10:  
The Change in the Earth's Aura through the Crucifixion**

1.

What does it mean that, through Moses, it was prophesied that the Christ would come?

[Keyed to ms. page 60]

2.

According to Steiner and the Gospel of St. John, how is the physical event of the Mystery of Golgotha essentially a *spiritual* event that “stands at the central point of all earthly happenings”?

[Keyed to ms. page 61]

3. According to Steiner, what is the deeper, more esoteric meaning intended by Christ-Jesus during the Last Supper when He said, “This is my body, this is my blood” about his body and his blood? Does this match up with the way you have always seen it? Or is there something new for you, here – perhaps radically new? What might that be? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 62]

4. Steiner speaks of the Last Supper in a very non-traditional way—as “the greatest mystery of the Earth, the connection between the Event of Golgotha and the entire evolution of the Earth.” He further says: “If we can learn to feel that in the Last Supper, the flowing of the blood from

the wounds of the Savior had not only a human, but a cosmic significance; that is, it gave to the Earth the force to carry forward its evolution.”

In what way(s) is this view different from what you have thought about the Last Supper? What does this new view open you up to? What might be the connection between (as Steiner says) the Last Supper and the Event of Golgotha, between the Last Supper and the earth’s evolution? In what way(s) does this view turn a more traditional Christian explanation on its ear? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 62]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 11:  
The Purification of the Three Bodies through the Ego,  
and Transformation through the Christ Impulse**

1. What, according to Steiner, are the metamorphoses of our four bodies that are required in order for the human being to evolve spiritually? Discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 67]

2. What has kept the human being from evolving, according to Steiner? What has kept the human being from evolving, according to *you*? What does Steiner point towards as being different in the future? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 67]

3. Steiner says that “the greatest victory for the human being” will come about by our conquering and transform our physical [i.e., our “lowest”]

body. Why is this so pivotal for human evolution? What role does the Christ Impulse play in this? What would you need to pay attention to for this transformation to happen for *you*? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 67]

4. How, according to Steiner, does our present-day humanity suffer from not yet having transformed our different levels of bodies? What can you point to, in your own experience and observations? What does Steiner say will bring this suffering to an end? Does this resonate with you? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 67]

4.  
How does our present-day humanity suffer from not yet perfecting the transformation of our different levels of bodies? What will bring this suffering to an end?

[Keyed to ms. page 67]

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Questions keyed to Chapter 12:  
**Karma**

1. What does “Karma” mean to you? From where have you derived your views of Karma? Does what Steiner says about the Christ’s role in bringing the idea of Karma, and the karmic law, into expression change or modify your views up to now? If so, in what way(s)? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. pages 72-73]

2. Steiner tells us, “If a person really believes in the I AM, in the Christian sense, he will not judge. He will say: ‘I know that Karma is the great

adjuster. Whatever you may have done, I do not judge it!' The I AM must be respected; it must be left to Karma, to the great law which is the law of the Christ-Spirit Himself."

How is this guidance different from a simple injunction not to judge others? What is the role of Karma in this? Is it a new view, for you, to consider the connection between Karma and the Christ-Spirit? How might this view shift your way of addressing human error and moral transgressions? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 73]

3. What, according to Steiner, must take place in order for humanity to understand true esoteric Christianity? What is your sense of how humanity *does* see Christianity? Do you think this is accurate and complete? Is something missing? (If so, what?) What do you perceive as the connection between taking in the Impulse present in the Gospel of St. John, and accomplishing the Christian ideal?

[Keyed to ms. page 74]

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Questions keyed to Chapter 13:

**The Evolution of Humanity through the Descent into Materialism**

1. Steiner writes emphatically about how, in his own time, spirit has descended into a materialistic civilization. What are some indications of this? How did men make use of the spiritual forces to bring about great discoveries and inventions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century? In what ways were the material results dependent on spiritual forces? Do you see this happening in our own time, as well? Do you think we are making progress on a spiritual as well as material level? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 77]

2. According to Steiner, why do we human beings attach so much importance to our own personality and feel so much like a separate human individual? Have you experienced this, yourself? Would you characterize it as positive (e.g., bringing about strength, autonomy, confidence, etc.) . . . negative (e.g., bringing about self-centeredness, disconnection, etc.) . . . or some of each? What might be the connection between this separateness and being plunged “deeper and deeper into matter”? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 77]

3. Steiner asserts that the era of the incarnation of the Christ occurred because man’s feeling of personality had progressed far enough by that time that men could step outside themselves and create their gods in their own image. Does this ring true, in your observation? What do you see as important about understanding God as a personal manifestation? How did this understanding of God as a personal manifestation influence the evolution towards which we are tending now?

[Keyed to ms. page 77]

4. Why do you think it was important for men to progress from experiencing themselves as a member of the Godhead to experiencing themselves as a personality? Has this legacy had any impact on your own perspective (whether directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously)? And what do you see as the influence of Greek and Roman art in this development?

[Keyed to ms. pages 77-78]

5. Steiner tells us that in the evolution from the Lemurian to the Atlantean ages, the inner world – which is encompassed by the ego or the “I AM” – was not yet delineated in sharp contours. Considering this, what caused the human being to look to his own inner nature rather than looking outside himself? What do you experience as your own

balance of looking within/looking outside? After taking in what you have read so far, do you find yourself with a desire to shift that balance in either direction? If so, which direction, and why? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. pages 78-79]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 14:**  
**The Knowledge of the Christ in the Old Testament**

1. Steiner writes that “In cultural Epoch 3, those human beings who had passed through a normal evolution began to feel themselves as individuals; yet at the same time, they knew that they were sheltered within the whole, and that God lived for them in the blood flowing down to them through the generations. ‘I and Father Abraham are one’ means that the individual felt himself to be preserved within the whole line of descendants back to Abraham. However, it was predicted only to the followers of the Old Testament that there existed something spiritually more profound than the Divine Fatherhood which ran through the blood of successive generations.”

What was the meaning of “I and Father Abraham are one” as it was revealed to Moses, and as people in cultural Epoch 3 understood it? Is this something you can relate to, yourself, based on your experience of growing up in your family? Did you feel like part of a “tribe” when you were younger? If so, did that feeling expand to include all your ancestors, including those you never met or even heard about? If this was not the case for you, does reading about it in Steiner make you wish that it was? If so, in what way?

Does it seem to you that this ancestral belonging to the Divine Father is a necessary precursor to moving beyond it, in the way that Steiner talks about (“there existed something spiritually more profound than the Divine Fatherhood which ran through the blood of successive generations”)? Or do you think it’s possible to move to this next step without experiencing the earlier foundation? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 83]

2. According to Steiner, what is the evidence in the Old Testament that the actual Spirit of God of antiquity is none other than the Christ? Can you resonate with this? What does it bring up for you? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 83]

3. What was the Christ Event that required advance preparation? What was the nature of this advance preparation, and which people were prepared in this way? Can you relate to this in terms of your own capacities, actual or potential? Why do you think Steiner says that the preparations given at that time would not work in modern times? What's absent from our own time that was present during the time of Christ Jesus? What is the nature of our modern-day loss? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. pages 84-85]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 15:**  
**The Perfect Spiritual Harmonization of the Human and the Environment, and Its Relationship to the Divine Appearing as an Individual Man**

1. What does Steiner point to as being behind the works of the Greek sculptors, dramatists, and architects to explain the evolution of human spiritual consciousness in that epoch? Can you relate to his explanation? Is there anything in our present time that you can see as having a similar influence on the culture? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 90]

2. According to Steiner, how did the Romans view real justice, and how did it affect the consciousness of individuals in the society of that period? Can you locate anything of this view continuing into our own time? If so, what do you see? And if you don't see any modern-day trace, do you think it would be valuable—for humanity's sake—to weave some parts of it back in? If so, which ones? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 90]

3. In terms of architecture, according to Steiner what aspects of the Greek temple tell us about the *inner* characteristic of space? Can you relate to this view, from your experience of seeing images of Greek temples? Why is the *inner* characteristic of space so important to the evolution of the incarnation of Christ-Jesus? And what is the spiritual meaning of Plato's saying, "God geometrizes continually"? How might this understanding be helpful to us in our own time?

[Keyed to ms. pages 91-92]

4. What, to Steiner, is the *spiritual* difference between a Greek temple and a present-day Church? If people in our own time were to experience the architectural structure of modern-day churches similarly to how ancient Greeks experienced their temples, what shift(s) in consciousness do you think they would need to make? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 92]

5. Steiner says that Epoch 4 was "one in which the human being harmonized perfectly with his environment and was able to understand that the Divine is able to appear in an individual man." What was it about the environment during Epoch 4 that enabled this to take place? And if, in our own time, we wished to live in a similar way, what do you

think we would we need to do in order to harmonize with our environment?

[Keyed to ms. page 93]

6. What is the difference between the “pre-Christian” and the “post-Christian” period?

[Keyed to ms. page 93]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 16:**  
**Preparing the Physical Instrument for the Spirit**

1. Steiner asserts that “the birth of Christianity appears as something positively necessary in the whole spiritual course of human events.” What were the necessary conditions to enable this to take place? How are we doing on this score in our own time? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. pages 98-99]

2. We have been acculturated to view the term “race” in a certain way, but Steiner asserts that the divisions among people in our time (and *his* time) had much more to do with *inner character*.

In Steiner’s view, what is behind the old points of view about race? And how does this differ from how race will be viewed in the future? Does this seem plausible to you? What do you think will have to take place in order for Steiner’s positive vision to prove true?

[Keyed to ms. page 99]

3. Steiner tells us that “In Epoch 5, our own age, a long preparation is needed for the human being to become a fit instrument for the Mana or Spirit-Self that had to enter the human being. This preparation (over thousands of years) requires man to become a true bearer of the ‘I’ or ego, where not only will he need to make his physical body an instrument for the ego, but the other members of his being as well.”

What is involved in the “long preparation” to make the human being a fit instrument for the Spirit Self (*Mana*)? If this already has been in the works for centuries before our own time, where are we in the process at this time? Do you sense an implication that *we* have a part to play in this preparation? What might that be? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 100]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 17:**  
**The Progression of the Spirit-Self through the Epochs**

1. According to Steiner, in **Epoch 1**, the ancient Indian civilization, human beings learned to develop a physical instrument for the ego as well as a fitting etheric body. Contemplation, rather than physical labor, was prized, as was special care and cultivation of the etheric body.

Remnants of the gifts of this level of civilization are still available in our time—the interest in yoga, in spiritual contemplation, and so on. What other examples do you find? Also, how could it serve us now to embrace some of these gifts as we evolve towards the human being of Epoch 6? What might it look like to include them in your own life?

[Keyed to ms. pages 103 [Synopsis], 104-105]

2. In **Epoch 2**, the ancient Persian epoch, Steiner says that the major epochal transition “consisted in passing over from a state of inactivity to one of activity in the material world. The movement of the hands and

everything that was connected with it, the transition from inactivity to physical work.”

Do you find any parallels with your own experience of life? For example, might this transition show up in early childhood development—say, from the musings of infancy to the hands-on activities of later childhood? Which of these two epochal emphases characterizes *you* more? What are some of the current cultural expressions of an emphasis on physical activity in the material world?

[Keyed to ms. pages 103 [Synopsis], 104]

3. What does Steiner say about the movement of the ego in **Epoch 3**, the Assyrian-Babylonian-Chaldean-Egyptian period? How was the Egyptian approach to the outer world different than that of our own time? The 20<sup>th</sup>-century psychologist Carl Jung said that we have “Four Functions”: thinking, feeling, sensing, and perceiving (some of which are dominant in a given person, while others are undeveloped). Which of these functions would you imagine to be dominant during Epoch 3? How did this dominance play out, especially regarding the balance of the outer and the inner life? What do you think such a life would be like? Does it appeal to you, or is another way preferable? Explore and discuss.

[Page 103 [Synopsis], 105]

4. In **Epoch 4**, the Greco-Roman period, a major evolutionary contribution was made during this time. What was it? What do you think might be the benefits of living in an era characterized by thought that was not directly connected to the things thought about? What do you think might be the disadvantages? Explore and discuss.

[Page 103 [Synopsis], 105]

5. **Epoch 5** is our present time (beginning in the Middle Ages): the development of the Consciousness Soul. During this period, what were the factors that gave the individual a sense of worth and self? How was this reflected in the outer world? Do you think that in our own time, this necessary evolutionary development would be experienced as a gain or a loss, or both? What was gained, and what was lost? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. pages 103 [Synopsis],105-106]

6. **Epoch 6**, still to come, is presented as the fruit of the evolutionary tree. What, according to Steiner, will come to pass during this epoch? How will it manifest? What do you think it might be like to *become* such a person, and to live connected to others in this way?

[Keyed to ms. pages 104 [Synopsis], 106]

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### Questions keyed to Chapter 18:

#### **The Peace and Brotherhood to Come in Epoch 6**

1. Steiner says that “At present there is a notion, closely linked with individuality and the human personality, that human beings must contend with one another, must have different opinions. Men have not yet reached the point of recognizing and overcoming the personal sympathy and antipathy/animosity that divides them. In Epoch 6, Mana/Spirit-Self, the sources of truth will be increasingly experienced within the strengthened human individuality, and there will be agreement between what different people experience as the truth.”

What is Steiner's view of the cause behind people's contention with one another about their different opinions? What is his view of how this will transform in Epoch 6? Based on your experience of being alive during Epoch 5 (and of learning about cultural history prior to that time), do you think this could actually be possible? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 110 [Synopsis], 110-111]

2. What does Steiner say would have to happen within human beings for this widespread level of agreement to take place? Given our current cultural experience of contention about differing opinions, does this prognosis seem actually possible for the human species? How does all this land in *you*? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 110 [Synopsis], 111]

3. Steiner uses the example of mathematics to illuminate what will open the gate of Occultism. He writes: "The mathematician builds the shapes of iron into machines according to mathematical laws, as the Occultist shapes life and soul in the world according to the laws of the realms. The mathematician is led back to real life through his mathematical laws, the Occultist no less so through his laws. Just as he who is ignorant of mathematics is not able to understand how the mathematician builds up the machine, so he who is not an Occultist is unable to understand the plans by which the Occultist works upon the qualitative forms of life and soul."

What can we learn from the mathematical model about how to rise to a higher perception? What would we need to cultivate in ourselves in order to get there? What would we need to let go of? What do you think might be desirable – and / or undesirable – about this way of being? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 111]

4. What does Steiner suggest that the heliotropic tendency of plants (turning towards the sun) tell us about how human beings will be in Epoch 6? Do you view this example from nature as a metaphor? As something actual that we can look forward to and help prepare the way for? If so, in what way(s) do you think we can prepare for that world? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 112]

5. Steiner asserts that “Epoch 6 will be a very important one, because it will bring Peace and Brotherhood through a common Wisdom.” What is the spiritual state that will aid the evolution that we are preparing for, and towards which we are being prepared? What is it that Steiner is calling a “spiritual marriage”? Does it seem possible to you? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to ms. page 112]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 19:**  
**Drawing Forth the True Spiritual Content of Christianity**

1. Steiner tells us that “The first preparation [for the unity and brotherhood to come about in Epoch 6] was something still wholly external, operating from the spiritual world, something that had not yet descended into the physical world. That has been pointed out in the great mission of the Hebrew people. In Epoch 3, prepared for Moses out of the Hebrew people, we see streaming forth the mission to deliver to humanity the God who then descended deeper into matter and appeared in the flesh. First He was prophesized, then later He appeared to the physical eyes in the flesh.”

Throughout this book, Steiner has been leading up to the immersion of spirit into matter as a human being. What does this historical

through-line suggest to you about the real possibility of unity and brotherhood coming about in the next epoch? Why do you think it has been so important for God to incarnate in the flesh? How will this help bring about Epoch 6's promise, and do we—do *you*—play a part in this? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 116 [Synopsis], 116-117]

2. Steiner tells us that “had humanity had entered into our most deeply materialistic age without Christianity, it would be impossible for it to again find the impulse upwards. Thus we must imagine that mankind made a movement downward into matter, and that before the lowest stage was reached, then came the other Impulse—the Christ Impulse—which impelled it again upward in the opposite direction.”

As you reflect on what's behind these words, does Steiner's view make deep sense to you? Was Christianity the saving grace of an overly materialistic age, without which we would be mired in materialism without a way to reach the higher world? And what do you make of the dynamic of the Christ Impulse descending so that it can rise up? Are you aware of other situations that require a descent in order to rise? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 116 [Synopsis], 117]

3. Why does Steiner say that Christianity has been misunderstood by being interpreted materialistically? Does this match your own impression? If so, in what way(s)? If not, what's the difference? What would need to happen in our time to put this distortion to rights? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 116]

4. What do you think about Steiner's assertion of a direct link between the appearance of modern inventions (bearing in mind that Steiner was

writing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries) such as the railroad and steamship, and Christianity? How are they connected?

What do you think Steiner means when he says, “Because Christianity waited until the right moment of time for its appearance, an external culture became possible”? And what about his next claim, that “because [Christianity] entered just at the right moment, it became possible for those who unite themselves with the Christ Principle to be able to rise again out of materiality”? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 118]

5. According to Steiner, how has Christianity been misunderstood and interpreted materialistically? How has this affected the interpretation of the Last Supper, rather than understanding its true meaning? What, according to Steiner, *is* its true meaning? Is this a new paradigm for you? If so, in what way(s)? What else might this new way of seeing the Last Supper shift in your understanding? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 118-119]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 20:**  
**THE COMING THIRD CHAPTER OF CHRISTIANITY: THE MARRIAGE  
OF HUMANITY AND THE SPIRIT**

1. Steiner says that there are three chapters of Christianity: “The first is the period of its prediction, up to the time of the appearance of Christ Jesus and a little beyond; the second is the deepest possible immersion of the human spirit in matter and the materialization of Christianity itself; and the third [still to come in Epoch 6] is a spiritual understanding of Christianity by means of a soul-deepening.”

What happened during the first chapter of Christianity that made it the “first chapter”? What happened to bring about the “second chapter”? And what is happening/will happen for the “third chapter”?

Does this make intrinsic sense to you? Does it resonate with anything you recognize from your own perceptions and/or your spirit? How does (if it does) this story of the evolution of Christianity transform your vision and understanding of what Christianity actually is? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 122 [Synopsis], 123, 124]

2. According to Steiner, what is our task in terms of preparing for Epoch 6? Explore and discuss this both culturally and personally.

[Keyed to pages 122 [Synopsis], 123, 126]

3. Steiner tells us: “Previously, mankind had not lived in this kind of brotherliness brought about by the spirit unfolding with the inner being, in which peace exists between man and man. Prior to this, there was only the love prepared physically through the tie of blood. This love develops gradually in a spiritual love, which then descends upon the earth.”

What do you see as the distinction between love that comes about through blood ties, and love that comes about by the spirit unfolding with the inner being? What is your own experience—actual, or imagined—with this? What could you envision taking place in a world where love was derived from the unfolding spirit within human beings? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 123-124]

4. What does Steiner say will be the result of the third chapter of initiation, in terms of love and relationship? What must take place in order for this realization to happen? Based on what you have read here

so far—as well as your own experience, conjectures, and searchings—what do you see as our part in this third chapter? Is this inevitable? Or are there things we need to become aware of and then enact? If so, what are they? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 124]

5. According to Steiner, what are we to learn from the marriage at Cana, in terms of the *esoteric* meaning? How is this different from the usual interpretation? And what is the transformation of relationship that Christ Jesus' mission was signed to bring about? In your view, has it succeeded so far to any extent? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 125]

6. According to Steiner, what has prevented humankind from truly understanding the Christ Impulse? What can we understand about it currently? Having read this far in this book, what do *you* understand? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 125]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 21:**  
**THE TASK OF INITIATES**

1. What is needed to prepare for the higher world? What distinguishes an “initiate”? What is the initiate's relationship to the physical world, in addition to the spiritual world? In what ways can you relate to this, whether from actual comparable experience or by sensing into it? What

would be the benefits—for you, for others, for the earth’s evolution—of preparing yourself for the higher world in this way?

[Keyed to page 128 (Synopsis), 129]

2. What do you think Steiner means by saying that an initiate must become a “homeless” person? How is this different from our modern association of “homelessness”? How does Steiner’s sense of “homelessness” actually benefit the initiate? Could you see yourself in this internal position? Explore this.

[Keyed to pages 129-130]

3. What interests you about what Steiner says about differences among human beings in different places on the earth? Is this a very new way of thinking about differences for you – especially in terms of their connection with the descent (as in the Lemurian period) from the spiritual spheres? How might this way of looking at human differences open up further space for experiencing the commonality of human experience?

[Keyed to page 130]

4. What does Steiner say will expand and evolve the kinds of small, self-referenced communities that we have become used to? What was the initiate instructed to hold in mind and heart so that he might become objective about his feelings developed within the heart of the community? What, if anything, does this suggest looking into so that you might play a more intentional part in this evolution?

[Keyed to page 130]

5. What is the task of Christianity regarding the Impulse of Brotherhood? Why was it important for the initiate to possess this Impulse as an individual, first? Explore what you think might be involved in expanding the individual understanding to the whole of humanity.

[Keyed to pages 128 (Synopsis), 130]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 22:**  
**WHAT IT TAKES TO PERCEIVE THE HIGHER WORLDS**

1. What is the connection between the ability to perceive spiritual worlds and the development of “higher organs”? In which of our bodies, beyond the physical body, do these higher organs need to be developed? What might it be like if you were to take the needed steps to develop such higher organs of perception?

[Keyed to pages 134 (Synopsis), 135]

2. Why can't the human astral body develop higher sense organs during the day? What does this suggest about how we might need to live, in order for these higher organs to develop in our own astral bodies?

[Keyed to pages 134 (Synopsis), 135]

3. What is the process by which the physical body *indirectly* can play a part in the development of higher organs in the astral body? What might this suggest about how to go about one's life during the day, in order to help activate this higher-organ development?

[Keyed to pages 135-136]

5. What is the nature of the higher organs Steiner refers to? What is the difference between clairvoyant thinking and ordinary materialistic thinking? Have you ever experienced clairvoyant thinking, to any degree? If so, what was that like? How was it different for you from ordinary thinking? And if you have not, does what Steiner puts forth make you interested in experiencing clairvoyant thinking? What might be the benefits for you? For others? For humanity?

[Keyed to Commentary, page 136]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 23:  
DEVELOPING THE FEELING LIFE PRODUCTIVE OF HIGHER  
ORGANS OF PERCEPTION IN THE ASTRAL BODY**

1. What is the “methodical schooling” mentioned by Steiner that we can do to “take our inner life in hand” so that the astral body can be reshaped while we sleep? What do we need to *stop* doing in order for this to happen? What do you envision as the benefits of being able to do this for your own life? For humanity?

[Keyed to pages 138 (Synopsis), \_\_]

2. What was the Rosicrucian-Christian method of working through *feelings* to develop higher sense organs in the astral body during the night? And what needs to be done towards this end, during the day?

[[Keyed to pages 138 (Synopsis), 139-141]

3. What are the three ways of regulating meditation by working through *feelings*? If this were a path *you* were choosing, which of these ways would you be more likely to follow—and why? Would you base your choice on your temperament . . . your vision of the probable results . . . something else (if so, what)? What do you see as the value of each of these paths?

[Keyed to pages 138-141]

4. In the Christian initiation, these are the seven experiences of feeling-life, through which the astral body is actually so affected that it develops its organs during the night:

- Step One, “Washing the Feet”
- Step Two, “taking on all possible sorrow in the world”
- Step Three, “defending what is holy in you from jeers and gibes”
- Step Four, “ceasing to connect your ego with your body”
- Step Five, “the mystical death (the descent to hell)”
- Step Six, “the Internment and Resurrection” (feeling at one with the entire earth body)

Which of these seven experiences could you see yourself embracing? Which might you want to avoid – and why? What might induce you to work with the ones you’re less inclined to embrace?

And what would you envision as a valuable outcome of doing these practices?

[Keyed to pages 141-143]

5. The Commentary to Chapter 23 speaks of these steps more simply.

Does the simpler wording of these steps change anything about your feelings or perceptions regarding these steps? Could you more readily envision undergoing any of these steps, considering? If so, which ones?

What's your sense of why someone in the Christian tradition would someone willingly undergo this initiation?

And what's your take on what the author says about how Step 7 cannot be described in words, only by thinking "without the physical brain-instrument"? What does it mean to you to think without the physical brain? How else would you understand things, if not with the physical brain?

[Keyed to Commentary, pages 143-144]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 24:**  
**CATHARSIS AND ILLUMINATION**

1. The Spiritual Science that Steiner speaks of involves *impressions*. The astral body develops a higher organ of perception by integrating during sleep the deliberate impressions that it receives from the physical body during the day. The etheric body is then impressed by this developed astral body. All this is necessary for our non-material bodies to become "a new member of the human organism," in which we are permeated by "Mana or Spirit-Self."

What does this mean to you? Sense into it. What would your consciousness be like if your non-material bodies were impressed by deliberately cultivating impressions in the body preceding? How would this transform into a new member of the human organism? What is the trajectory from there to being permeated by "Mana or Spirit-Self"?

[Keyed to pages 148 (Synopsis), 148-149 ]

2. What is the purpose of *catharsis*, or purification? Do you understand “catharsis,” here, in its usual meaning, or is there something very specific intended by Steiner? What is it that must be purified out of the astral body? When this purification has taken place, what is the relationship between the astral and the etheric bodies, in regard to the development of higher organs? If *you* were seeking to experience this purification, what would you need to do to help it happen?

[Keyed to page 149 ]

3. In the *pre-Christian* process of initiation, how was this purification accomplished? What do you think about it? In our times, are we given adequate preparations to undergo such a purification? What then needs to take place for *illumination* to be the result?

If there were an alternative, would you be more apt to say “yes” to that alternative, or to undergo the pre-Christian initiation? Why?

[Keyed to pages 149-150]

4. What was the role of Meditation and Concentration in developing a sufficiently strong impulse in the astral body to overcome the resistance of the physical body? From your own experiences of meditation and concentration, how can you relate to this?

[Keyed to pages 148 (Synopsis), 150]

5. In the Commentary, the author of this book says: “I think that now, the 1960s movement has come back in full force and the Light is shining down in an even more profound way. We no longer need psychedelics to reach those higher states; the impulse is strong, now, on its own.”

Does thing strike a chord in you? Do you agree that this is true? If not, do you *want* for it to be true? And if so, what in this chapter – or even the entire book so far – gives you hope that it *can* be true?

[Keyed to Commentary, pages 150-151]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 25:**

**THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN AS A MEANS OF INITIATION**

1. As hinted in the questions for Chapter 24, there is another way to achieve the Illumination than through the specific Christian initiation described previously as the Seven Steps. As Steiner puts it, *“If, instead, the Christian pupil continually meditates upon the passages of the Gospel of St. John, he is actually in a condition to reach initiation.”*

What is the necessary inward state in which to read this Gospel in order to bring about actual initiation? What are the outward conditions? In what way, and on what level, will the person doing this come to an experience of initiation?

Is this alternative preferable to you over the pre-Christian, 7-step initiation? Could you envision giving yourself to it?

[Keyed to page 154 (Synopsis), 155]

2. In light of this option to become an initiate by deeply reading the Gospel of St. John, what—according to Steiner—does “know thyself” mean? What must the inner perceptive organs gaze onto? What is true higher knowledge, and what is its relationship to evolution? What is the difference between gazing within yourself and gazing outwardly? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 154 (Synopsis), 155-156]

3. What is the connection between the purified astral body and the “Virgin Sophia” or “Holy Spirit”? What must take place within the inner being for this connection to be made? What is the connection between the “Virgin Sophia” and the “Holy Spirit”?

What is opening up to you, through reading this chapter/book and also in the discussions so far, that is making “the Virgin Sophia” and the “Holy Spirit” more than just conceptual ideas but something that is beginning to come to life for you?

[Keyed to page 154 (Synopsis), 156]

4. “A person who has received the Holy Spirit into himself speaks as a spiritual instrument.” How is this so? What does it mean? How does it manifest in a person? Could you envision this taking place, at some point, in yourself? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 154 (Synopsis), 156]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 26:**  
**ESOTERIC NAMING**

1. Steiner says that a higher stage in the development of the initiate is the ability to give the impulse towards the Virgin Sophia and the Holy Spirit to others. Even though only Christ Jesus was equipped to do that, and this is not something that anyone can take on, it still is valuable to explore and discuss how giving something of value that one possesses to others adds to one’s own experience as well as empowering those who receive what is given. (However, only Christ Jesus could give to the Earth what was necessary to accomplish this, by implanting in the spiritual

part of the Earth those forces which make this possible, as described in the Christ Initiation.)

Explore and discuss this.

[Keyed to page 160 (Synopsis),

2. Steiner tells us that, at the time the Gospels were written, names were given to people very differently from the way we have become used to in more modern times. How were names given at the time the Gospels were written? What kind of attention had to be paid to the person being named? If you were to take on this practice, yourself—say, in naming a child, or perhaps even in taking on a new, more distinctly spiritual name, yourself—what’s your sense of what would need to go into determining such a name?

[Keyed to page 160 (Synopsis), 161]

3. Steiner reveals the surprising news that, esoterically, the Mother of Jesus was actually not called “Mary” but rather “the Virgin Sophia.” Why was this? What Mystery is evidenced by this? What has it to do with the evolution of the world that (at least as a subtext) is the primary message of this book?

[Keyed to page 161-162]

4. We are so used to thinking of the Mother of Jesus as “Mary” that it may come as a surprise—perhaps even a shock—that, according to Steiner, “Nowhere do we find the name ‘Mary.’” In addition to the surprise factor, what might this suggest about some differences between the teachings of the esoteric Christianity versus what has been handed down more exoterically?

[Keyed to page 162]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 27:  
THE MYSTERY OF THE PENETRATION INTO JESUS BY THE HOLY  
SPIRIT**

1. Steiner says we do not understand what the “virgin birth” means. What is it that we do not understand about this?

According to Steiner, the writer of the Gospel of St. John (in agreement with the other disciples’ Gospels) wishes to show that *Joseph* is the father of Jesus, and that the ancient God exists as an eternal Presence in Jesus.

Steiner writes, “For the writer of the Gospel of St. John, who could gaze into the spiritual world, the important thing was not the words, ‘I and Father Abraham are one,’ but that at every moment of time, there exists in the human being an Eternal which was present in him before Father Abraham.”

Does this shift your own understanding, in terms of what has been put forth exoterically about the ancestry of Jesus—in terms of both Joseph being the blood-father, and the eternality of the Divine Father manifesting in/as Jesus?

[Keyed to page 167 (Synopsis), 168-169]

2. Steiner now gives us a perspective that is nowhere in the traditional story of Christianity, but only within the Mysteries. He says that only when Jesus reached the age of 30 did the Christ take possession of his bodies—for the first time in human evolution.

Why, according to Steiner, did this happen in this way?

And what does it open for you in your understanding of (1) what the Christ incarnation means, and (2) what the previous chapters of this book have been addressing, in terms of what needs to happen in order to develop higher organs by which to perceive the higher spiritual worlds?

Lastly, what is your deepest *response* to this revelation? Shock? Surprise? Validation? Etc.? What new openings are now available to you?

[Keyed to pages 167 (Synopsis), 169]

3. In this chapter, “the Word become flesh” takes on a significance beyond what you may have been privy to previously. Steiner says that the perfection and maturity of the corporeality of Jesus the man enabled the Spiritual Being of the Sun—the Holy Spirit—to penetrate into it. Since Jesus lived to the age of 33, for the last 3 years of his life when he spoke (the ego of Jesus of Nazareth having let his body), it was the Christ who spoke through him.

What does this revelation do to you, for you? Since it is such a different view of the incarnation of God into Jesus of Nazareth than the conventional story has held forth, how does this explanation touch you, change things for you? What does it say about the incarnation of spirit into matter, through the process of initiation into the higher worlds?

Explore this in discussion, on any level that holds interest and meaning for you.

[Keyed to pages 167-168 (Synopsis), 169]

4. Steiner tells us that the Mystery of Golgotha was a spiritual process as well as a physical process: that not only the blood from Christ’s wounds flowed into the earth, but the Christ Himself flowed into the very being of the earth.

What are the (stupendous) implications of this very different way of seeing the event? What does it suggest about the nature of the earth—particularly in light of the evolution Steiner has been discussing throughout this book? What does it suggest should be acknowledged—perhaps even celebrated—about the end result of what happened at Golgotha, contrary to the conventional Christian view that “Christ died for your sins”?

What is your own response to this spiritual incarnation of the earth, this transmission of spirit into matter? How might it shift your relationship to the earth and the planet at this time?

[Keyed to pages 168 (Synopsis), 169-170]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 28:**  
**HOW THE GOSPEL OF ST. JOHN CAN TRANSFORM THE ASTRAL  
BODY INTO A VIRGIN SOPHIA**

1. Steiner tells us that the only way Jesus was able to receive the Holy Spirit into himself and have it spread out over the entire earth was for him to make his astral body increasingly more like a Virgin Sophia.

Do you remember how, in Chapter 25, Steiner said that reading the Gospel of St. John deeply and feelingly presents an alternative to undergoing the pre-Christian seven-stage initiatory process? Here, he tells us that if you read what is written in the Gospel of St. John and allow it to work sufficiently on you, your astral body will become a Virgin Sophia and thus be receptive to the Holy Spirit—as took place with Christ Jesus.

Well! What do you make of that? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 173 (Synopsis), 174]

2. Steiner gives a very unusual, esoteric explanation of how—at the site of the Crucifixion—the Gospel of St. John came to be written. What is this explanation? How does it link up with the threads Steiner has woven in previous chapters concerning the higher development of the astral body?

How does this explanation land in you? What does it open up for you?

[Keyed to page 174]

3. Here is an assertion from Steiner that you may experience as (as we used to say in the 1960s) “mind-blowing”:

“The Gospel of St. John is the Gospel in which the writer has concealed powers which develop the Virgin Sophia. At the Cross, the mission was entrusted to him of *receiving this force as his mother* and of being the true, genuine interpreter of the Messiah.”

He further says that *perceiving in the spirit*, in the Christian sense, means transforming the astral body to such a degree that you possess something by means of which you can perceive the spirit.

And if you live in accordance with the Gospel of St. John and understand it spiritually, not only can it lead you to Christian catharsis but also you then will play a part in the Holy Spirit being united with the earth.

So here, the reader of this book is invited to be a participant in the great evolution of humanity and the earth by following the inherent prescription in the Gospel of St. John.

What is your response to this? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 173 (Synopsis), 175]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 29:**

**THE SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OF THE DISCIPLES AND THEIR  
REALIZATION OF THE RESURRECTION**

1. What was present in Mary Magdalene (as well as Jesus' other esoteric pupils) that made it possible for her see and understand Jesus' resurrection? (Hint: It's something that the previous recent chapters have been talking about.)

What are the two spiritual forms that are always to be seen when a corpse is present for a certain time after death? (Hint: It has to do with the two bodies whose higher development Steiner has taken pains to describe in previous chapters.)

Is this a different understanding of the Resurrection than you have been used to? Or perhaps a more nuanced understanding? What does this open up for you?

[Keyed to pages 178 (Synopsis) - 179]

2. Steiner asks, "Was it necessary for [Mary Magdalene] to be clairvoyant, to be able to behold the Christ? If you saw a person in physical form just a few days ago, do you think you would recognize him again if he should appear before you in spiritual form?"

What is your response? Discuss.

[Keyed to page 179]

3. According to Steiner, what is the *real* story of the disciple who came to be known as "Doubting Thomas"? What was he doubting? There seems

to be an element of materialism here (i.e., “I’ll believe it when I see it” kind of thing). What was Thomas lacking?

What do you think your own response (had you been there, with your current perspective) might have been?

But Steiner also says, “The effort was then made to assist [Thomas] to develop spiritual perception.” What does this imply about the attitude that best serves the evolution of the spirit? How can you adopt this attitude with yourself and others?

[Keyed to page 180]

4. Steiner ends Chapter 29 with a call to faith: “It is no ordinary force, but an inner clairvoyant power. ‘Permeate thyself with inner power; then, thou needest no longer hold as real only that which thou seest externally; for blessed are they who are able to know what they do not see outwardly!’”

Now that this book is coming to a close (only one more chapter to go), how do you experience this call? What does it say to you about what is in this book? What does it say to you personally?

[Keyed to pages 178 (Synopsis), 180]

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**Questions keyed to Chapter 30:**

**THE MISSION OF SPIRITUAL SCIENCE**

And so we come to the final chapter in this most striking and mind-expanding book. Enjoy savoring—perhaps even drawing out—your responses to the following questions.

1. Steiner says of the disciples present at the Resurrection: “When they had to stand firm for the first time—that is, when they had actually to behold a spiritual event—they were still blinded and had first to find their way. They did not know that He was the same One who had earlier been among them.”

He then says: “The grossly materialistic would say: ‘Then the Resurrection is undermined!’ But no: the miracle of the Resurrection is to be taken quite literally, for He said: ‘Lo, I remain with you always, even unto the end of the age, unto the end of the cosmic age.’”

What does this mean to you? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 184]

2. What Steiner wants, through all that he has written in this book, is for us to have *a true spiritual understanding of Christianity*. “For this to take place, the soul [of the reader] must become more and more conversant with and understanding of the legacy of the writer of the Gospel of St. John, the great school of the Virgin Sophia, and the St. John Gospel itself.”

What has this book been preparing its readers for? “For those who have the will to allow themselves to be prepared for the Christ upon earth.” The Resurrection, says Steiner, is to be taken literally. “Christ Jesus . . . will come again—not in a form of flesh, but rather a form in which those who have been sufficiently developed through the power of the Gospel of St. John.” Humankind is “to keep its eyes open for the time when the Christ will appear again actively among men in the sixth cultural epoch, in order that this may be accomplished for a great part of humanity, which was indicated in the Marriage of Cana.”

What do you think about this? What is the effect on you (in you) of this prophetic and immensely hopeful assertion?

[Keyed to pages 183 (Synopsis), 184-185]

3. Steiner writes that “All concepts must change if a true spiritual understanding of Christianity is to come about.” He saw, in his own time (prior to his death in 1925), the threat of intolerance towards Spiritual Science (his views as expressed in this and other books) from people who view themselves as “Good Christians.”

What is needed, according to Steiner, is for Spiritual Science to lead people to the real Christianity that you have encountered in this book, and in the Gospel of St. John.

What do you think about this assertion? Have you found yourself, through reading this book, brought closer to the real Christianity? Have *your* concepts about Christianity undergone a sea-change through exploring the ideas in this book? Are *you* inclined to study the Gospel of St. John in the way that Steiner recommends? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to page 185]

4. Steiner says: “If we understand that we must call the real father of Christ Jesus the Holy Spirit who begot the Christ in the bodies of Jesus (physical, astral, and etheric) . . . we shall find it easy to understand that those disciples who were less highly initiated could not give so profound a picture of the Events of Palestine as could John, the Disciple whom the Lord loved.”

And further, Steiner writes: “If we try to make what we can learn from Spiritual Science about the Gospel of St. John into a feeling, into an experience, we shall then find that *this Gospel is not a textbook, but a force which can be active within our souls.*”

This is a very important distinction. Steiner is saying (as he has throughout this book) that we can allow the Gospel of St. John to work on our feeling nature, and transform us through our souls.

How do you receive this? What, for you, is the distinction between learning through intellectual knowledge (i.e., “a textbook”) and cultivating the penetration of a living force that can be active within your soul? What are you drawn to? Afraid of? Yearning for? What do you sense to be your part in the evolution of humanity and the earth, having now been exposed to all this? Explore and discuss.

[Keyed to pages 187-188]

5. “In concluding this text,” says Steiner, “one of the most important things asked of you as a reader is to hold this in mind and heart: that the Christ will come again—not in a form of flesh, but rather a form in which those who have been sufficiently developed through the power of the Gospel of St. John.

“Through Spiritual Science, we can perceive that in the course of history, Christ entered the evolution of humanity; and we know that He had once to live in a human being so that He could find a path leading through a human being into the spiritual atmosphere of the earth, often referred to as the Christ Impulse.”

This is the final question, then—literally, in the sense of the Book Club questions, and metaphorically and spiritually:

Has this book made a difference to you? Has there been an opening in your mind? Has there been some sort of turning point in your heart? If Christ entered the evolution of humanity by initially living as a human being – the “Christ Impulse” – has that Impulse stirred an equivalent or related impulse in you?

How has this book prepared (and perhaps even excited) you to be living during our Fifth Epoch time? What would you like to take away from this book that can live in you, continue to transform you, and inspire you in light of humanity and the earth evolving towards being the planet of Love? Does it feel more real to you than earlier in the book, when the subject was first raised?

What would you like the evolution of humanity and the earth to be?  
What would you like your own part in it to be?

Explore and discuss.

*Thank you for giving your mind, heart, and soul to reading this book.*

[Keyed to pages 184 (Synopsis), 187-188]