

Chapter 36

The Ballad Of John And Yoko

BIBLE

John also was baptizing in Enon near Salim, because there was much water there. They came, and were baptized.¹

A woman came to him having an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table.²

The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.”³ You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows.⁴

“Behold, you are wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that is hidden from you.”⁵ Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples; For I am faint with love.”⁶

The man said, “I heard your voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.”⁷

COMMENTARY

¹ **John 3:23** Water cleanses us on the outside, but awakening to the Christ spirit cleanses us on the inside.

² **Matthew 26:7** [*The woman is Japanese artist, musician and filmmaker Yoko Ono, whom John met in November 1966*]

³ **John 4:19** John’s relationship with Yoko would become one of the great romances of the era. It would also prove to be a powerful catalyst for his spiritual growth. Our relationships improve when we draw closer to God, and symbiotically, those same relationships offer great opportunities for spiritual growth.

⁴ **Psalms 45:7**

⁵ **Ezra 28:3**

⁶ **Song of Solomon 2:5** Deepak Chopra: “Within every love story hides the wooing of the gods and goddesses...Losing yourself in another person is the best way to find your true self. Surrender is the result of relinquishing the ego’s last claims to separation.”

⁷ **Genesis 3:10** Being natural, honest, and open (“naked”) makes us more attractive to a romantic partner. John had met his soul mate.

“Behold, you are beautiful, my love. Behold, you are beautiful. Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is as a flock of goats, that descend from Mount Gilead.⁸ I will give you thanks with my whole heart. Before the gods, I will sing praises to you.⁹

“How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride! How much better is your love than wine! The fragrance of your perfumes than all kinds of spices!¹⁰ I will give thanks to you, for you have answered me, and have become my salvation.¹¹

“Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field. Let us lodge in the villages!”¹²

They came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water, and seventy palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.¹³

⁸ **Song of Solomon 4:1** Plato: “The madness of love is the greatest of heaven's blessings.”

⁹ **Psalm 138:1** In “Julia” John gives thanks and sings praises: “Ocean child calls me, so I sing a song of love.” “Julia” is primarily a tribute to John’s mother Julia Stanley, but it’s also addressed to Yoko. “Ocean child” is an English translation of her name.

¹⁰ **Song Of Solomon 4:10** With Yoko, John found someone he could be totally himself with. She was not interested in his fame as a Beatle. Being completely honest with our partner about our feelings heals us spiritually. Our partner can act as a mirror for us to see the issues that we need to work on, and we get a chance to forgive them for the issues that they are working on. Yoko helped John deal with his feelings of insecurity and anger. “She’s made me into a whole person,” he shared. “I can afford to relax. I could never relax before... the old gang of mine was over the moment I met her.”

¹¹ **Psalm 18:21** Showing gratitude and giving our partner praise helps us to experience more of the Divine in our relationship. John: “All I gotta do is thank you girl, thank you girl.” (“Thank You Girl”)

¹² **Song Of Solomon 7:11**

¹³ **Exodus 15:27**

He erected an altar there, and called it *El Elohe Israel*¹⁴ and *Mizpah*, for he said, “Yahweh watch between me and you, when we are absent one from another.”¹⁵

At this, his disciples came. They marveled that he was speaking with a woman; yet no one said, “What are you looking for?” or, “Why do you speak with her?”¹⁶ Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane! Why do you listen to him?”¹⁷

About three hours later, his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in.¹⁸ When she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, his soul was troubled to death.¹⁹

She said to him, “How can you say, ‘I love you,’ when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength lies.”²⁰

He said, “Blessed be Yahweh, the God of Shem. Let Canaan be his servant.²¹ Yah is my strength and song. He has become my salvation.²² Yahweh’s name is a strong tower: the righteous run to him, and are safe.”²³

¹⁴ **Genesis 33:20** At the altar we give up our individual consciousness to make room for spiritual consciousness (which the name *Israel* represents).

¹⁵ **Genesis 1:49** *Mizpah* means “watchtower.” Love is keeping watch over the spiritual needs of our partner, recognizing that the most important relationship of all is between the soul and God. M. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled*: “Love is the will to extend one’s self for the purpose of nurturing one’s own or another’s spiritual growth.”

¹⁶ **John 4:27**

¹⁷ **John 10:20** “I want you so bad it’s driving me mad,” John admits to Yoko in “I Want You (She’s So Heavy).” John became obsessed with Yoko after they became lovers in May of 1968. She became his creative partner and constant companion. Seven years older, she was even a mother figure to John. He called her “the goddess of love and fulfillment of my whole life.”

¹⁸ **Acts 5:7** John was still married to his first wife Cynthia when he and Yoko began their affair. He and Cynthia had one child together, Julian, born in 1963.

¹⁹ **Judges 16:16**

²⁰ **Judges 16:15**

²¹ **Genesis 9:26**

²² **Psalms 118:14**

²³ **Proverbs 18:10**

Then he called his servant who ministered to him, and said, “Now put this woman out from me, and bolt the door after her.”²⁴ It is better to dwell in the corner of the housetop, than to share a house with a contentious woman.²⁵ A continual dripping on a rainy day and a contentious wife are alike.²⁶

“When a man takes a wife and marries her, then it shall be, if she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorce, and put it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”²⁷

Then his wife said to him, “Do you still maintain your integrity? Renounce God, and die.”²⁸ You shall not commit adultery.²⁹ As a bird that wanders from her nest, so is a man who wanders from his home.”³⁰

The multitude and the rulers of the city were troubled when they heard these things.³¹

“He who commits adultery with a woman is void of understanding. He who does it destroys his own soul.”³² Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: but God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.”³³

²⁴ **2 Samuel 13:17** John was well aware of his failings, and he admitted to being emotionally and physically abusive to Cynthia and to others in his life. In “Getting Better” he writes, apparently from his own experience: “I used to be cruel to my woman. I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved...Man I was mean but I’m changing my scene and I’m doing the best that I can.”

John: “I sincerely believe in love and peace. I am a violent man who has learned not to be violent and regrets his violence. I will have to be a lot older before I can face in public how I treated women as a youngster.”

²⁵ **Proverbs 21:9** John shows his dark side in songs like “Run For Your Life” (“I’d rather see you dead little girl, than to be with another man”) and “You Can’t Do That” (“If I catch you talking to that boy again, I’m gonna let you down and leave you flat”).

²⁶ **Proverbs 27:15**

²⁷ **Deuteronomy 24:1**

²⁸ **Job 2:9**

²⁹ **Exodus 20:14**

³⁰ **Proverbs 27:8**

³¹ **Acts 17:8**

³² **Proverbs 6:32**

³³ **Hebrews 13:4**

He overtook them, and he spoke these words to them.³⁴ “Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!³⁵ You are alienated from Christ, you who desire to be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace.”³⁶

“My dove, my perfect one, is unique. She is her mother’s only daughter. She is the favorite one of her who bore her. The daughters saw her, and called her blessed; the queens and the concubines, and they praised her.”³⁷

When his friends heard it, they went out to seize him: for they said, “He is insane.”³⁸ The foolish woman is loud, undisciplined, and knows nothing.³⁹

“Should a wise man answer with vain knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind?”⁴⁰ She is loud and defiant. Her feet don’t stay in her house.”⁴¹

Because they were rebellious against his spirit, he spoke rashly with his lips.⁴² He said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all this people.”⁴³

³⁴ **Genesis 44:6** [*“He” is John*]

³⁵ **Isaiah 5:21**

³⁶ **Galatians 5:4** John is trying to justify his infidelity by being critical of those who think they know what is best for others and who place more attention on the letter of the law rather than the condition of a man’s heart.

³⁷ **Song Of Solomon 6:9** [*John is referring once again to Yoko, his “perfect one.”*]

³⁸ **Mark 3:21** “The newspapers said, she’s gone to his head.” (“The Ballad Of John And Yoko”)

³⁹ **Proverbs 9:13** Initially, Yoko was not popular with Beatle fans. They saw her as a threat to the band and to John’s partnership with Paul, and they could not understand why John seemed to be so obsessed with her. She was often vilified by the public and in the media, but John always came to her defense.

⁴⁰ **Job 15:2** [*Yoko, from Japan, is the “east wind”*]

⁴¹ **Proverbs 7:11** John’s fellow Beatles also found Yoko hard to take at first. Always by John’s side, she even began accompanying him to recording sessions, which had been taboo up until that point. Her constant presence exacerbated the tension that was already starting to form between the members of the band.

⁴² **Psalms 106:33**

⁴³ **1 Samuel 2:23**

“Do two walk together, unless they have agreed?⁴⁴ Her ways are ways of pleasantness. All her paths are peace.⁴⁵

“Yahweh God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.’⁴⁶ Yahweh has established his throne in the heavens. His kingdom rules over all.⁴⁷ What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.⁴⁸

“Yahweh preserves the simple. I was brought low, and he saved me.⁴⁹ Now thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!”⁵⁰

Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army praising God, and saying,⁵¹ “Give thanks to Yahweh, for he is good, for his loving kindness endures forever.”⁵²

The east wind carries him away, and he departs. It sweeps him out of his place.⁵³ They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.⁵⁴

⁴⁴ **Amos 3:3**

⁴⁵ **Proverbs 3:17**

⁴⁶ **Genesis 2:18**

⁴⁷ **Psalms 103:19**

⁴⁸ **Mark 10:9** John tells us in “Don’t Let Me Down” that his affection for Yoko is “a love that lasts forever.”

⁴⁹ **Psalms 116:6** John’s relationship with Yoko was controversial, but there is no denying that it invigorated him. In “Oh My Love,” from his solo album *Imagine*, he expresses his gratitude to Yoko, describing how he has been transformed spiritually. He declares that “for the first time in my life my eyes are wide open...my eyes can see...my mind can feel.... I feel life...I feel love.”

⁵⁰ **2 Corinthians 9:15**

⁵¹ **Luke 2:13**

⁵² **Psalms 107:1**

⁵³ **Job 27:21** Yoko swept John off his feet, and effectively replaced Paul as his creative partner. She did not “break up the Beatles” as many people still insist; the foundation was already starting to crack. But her arrival on the scene certainly helped accelerate the process.

⁵⁴ **Genesis 2:25** John and Yoko, after posing nude for the cover of their *Two Virgins* album, became man and wife in March 1969, following his divorce from Cynthia. Their wedding, as documented in “The Ballad of John and Yoko,” was held “in Gibraltar near Spain.”