

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Is Marijuana In The Bible?

(Jerry Fite)

Those who want to legalize marijuana offer various reasons for its acceptance. It's addictive rate is less than tobacco and alcohol. Of those Americans who begin using tobacco, 21% become dependent on tobacco. 11% of those who begin drinking alcohol become addicted to alcohol. Of those who begin experimenting with marijuana, 4% become dependent upon pot. Some argue from these facts that something is wrong for making marijuana illegal, while the seemly more addictive substances of tobacco and alcohol are legal.

Some appeal to the Bible to show that God does not condemn marijuana, but actually commends its use in the Bible. God created plants and trees to be used as food (*Genesis 1:29*). Every herb yielding seed was created for food, a different use than inhaling its smoke into our lungs.

Another sees God promising marijuana use in Ezekiel's prophecy: “*And I will raise up unto them a plant for renown. . .*” (*Ezekiel 34:20*). However, this is wishful thinking for the context is promising Israel that they would be restored in their land, receiving abundance, not suffer-

ing shame and famine. The term “plant” is not promising one particular plant, but the accumulation of many plants making up a “garden” (NKJV) or a “plantation” (ASV). If one plant of renown is being promised by God, could we not say He must be promising the Aloe Vera plant with all its healing effects with just as much certainty as one desiring the passage to be highlighting the marijuana plant with its hallucinatory capabilities?

Some believe marijuana is found in the anointing oil prescribed by God to Moses: “*Take thou also unto thee the chief spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much. . . and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty. . .*” (*Exodus 30:23*). Some scholars believe the etymology of this Hebrew word is “kineboisin” which is cannabus in the Hebrew, the genus of marijuana. Yet, the term in the text is “qaneh” indicating simply cane or a reed. Some translations offer the words “sweet cane” indicating that it was a reed like plant with aromatic properties.

It is not certain the aromatic pod of the fibrous marijuana plant is in the anointing oil.

The ingredients could actually be from the aromatic calamus plant. Calamus is a plant with a distinct genus from cannabis. Sweet calamus is not necessarily the cannabis or the marijuana plant in *Exodus 30:23*.

For the sake of argument, let us assume that the cannabis or marijuana plant is correctly understood as one of the ingredients in the anointing oil. **No one could manufacture it for their own use.** “*Upon the flesh of man shall it not be poured, neither shall ye make any like it, according to the composition thereof. . . Whosoever compoundeth any like it, or whosoever putteth any of it upon a stranger, he shall be cut off from his people*” (*Exodus 30:31-33*). The ingredients were to be used for anointing oil, not pipe filler. The ingredients were not to be used for personal use, but for the anointing of the priest.

The claim that marijuana is in the Bible lacks convincing proof. The claims also fail in proving that God approves the smoking of marijuana. We are to never let any substance control us (*I Cor. 6:12*). Why would one submitting to God with all their being experiment with alcoholic drinks, tobacco or marijuana?