

# Unveiling the Taboo Topic: Marijuana in the Bible

The Bible is an ancient and revered text that has shaped the beliefs and values of billions of people throughout history. However, it also contains certain topics that have long been considered taboo, one of which is the use of marijuana.

In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the biblical perspective on marijuana, examining both explicit references and inferential passages. By delving into the scriptures and analyzing scholarly interpretations, we aim to shed light on a topic that has sparked curiosity and controversy for centuries.



## Taboo Topics In The Bible: Marijuana by Dante Fortson

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## Explicit Biblical References

Notably, there are no explicit references to marijuana by name in the Old or New Testament. However, some scholars believe that the plant known as

"kaneh bosem" mentioned in several biblical passages may be referring to cannabis.

For instance, in Genesis 49:11, the patriarch Jacob prophesies about his son Judah, saying, "He binds his foal to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine; he washes his garments in wine and his vesture in the blood of grapes."

Some scholars interpret "kaneh bosem" in this passage as referring to cannabis, as it is known to grow in vineyards and its leaves can be used for cleaning. Additionally, the phrase "washes his garments in wine" may allude to the psychoactive effects of marijuana, which can produce a sense of relaxation and euphoria.

## **Inferential Passages**

While explicit references to marijuana are limited, there are several passages in the Bible that some scholars believe may contain indirect references or allegorical meanings related to the plant.

One such passage is Exodus 30:23, which describes the ingredients for the holy anointing oil used in the Tabernacle:



***“Take thou also unto thee principal spices, of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, even two hundred and fifty shekels, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, And of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil an hin.”***

The "sweet calamus" mentioned in this passage is believed by some scholars to be cannabis, as its aromatic properties were valued in ancient times for both medicinal and ritualistic purposes.

Another passage that has been interpreted by some as a reference to marijuana is Proverbs 20:1, which states, "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."

While this passage does not explicitly mention marijuana, some scholars believe that it may be applicable to any intoxicating substance, including cannabis, as excessive consumption can lead to negative consequences.

## **Scholarly Interpretations**

The biblical references to marijuana, both explicit and inferential, have been the subject of scholarly debate for centuries. While some scholars maintain that the plant is indeed mentioned or alluded to in the Bible, others argue that the evidence is insufficient.

One prominent interpretation is that of ethnobotanist Jonathan Ott, who claims that "kaneh bosem" in Genesis 49:11 is a clear reference to cannabis based on its linguistic and cultural context.

On the other hand, other scholars such as biblical historian Frederick Charles Grant argue that the evidence for marijuana use in the Bible is tenuous and that "kaneh bosem" more likely refers to a type of reed or aromatic grass.

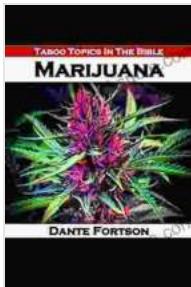
Despite the ongoing debate among scholars, it remains true that the Bible does not explicitly endorse or condemn the use of marijuana. The

passages that have been interpreted as references to the plant are open to a range of interpretations, and the ultimate meaning and application of these texts is a matter of ongoing discussion and study.

As societal attitudes towards marijuana continue to evolve, the biblical perspective on this topic will undoubtedly continue to be explored and re-evaluated. Ultimately, it is up to each individual to determine how they interpret the scriptures and apply them to their own lives.

## Additional Resources

- The Hidden History of Cannabis in the Bible
- Was Marijuana Mentioned in the Bible?
- Was Jesus a Stoner? Scholars Debate Cannabis in the Bible



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