

Exodus 30:22-33

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/exod/exod-30/exodus-3022-33/>

This passage concerns the oil used for anointing. Following the introduction, the LORD specifies how to make the anointing oil. Then the LORD states the purpose of the anointing oil, followed by the command to make it a permanent part of worship at the tabernacle.

After describing how to make the laver, *the Lord spoke to Moses* about how to make the *anointing oil*. The oil was made of *the finest of spices*:

- *Flowing myrrh*. Myrrh has been described as aromatic gum that exudes from the bark of a tree common in the Middle East. The priests were to use *five hundred shekels* of this *myrrh*. Along with being a unit of money, the *shekel* was a unit of weight measurement. “*Five hundred shekels*” would have been equivalent to about 12 ½ pounds (or around 5.7 kilograms).
- *Fragrant cinnamon*. They used *half as much cinnamon* (a fragrant spice) as myrrh, meaning *two hundred and fifty shekels*, or 6 ¼ pounds (2.85 kilograms).
- *Fragrant cane*. The nature of this *cane* is uncertain, but the Hebrew word (“qaneh”) means “reed”, which might mean that the *cane* was derived from a spicy reed plant. Like the *cinnamon*, they were to use *two hundred and fifty shekels* (6 ¼ pounds or 2.85 kilograms) of this spice.
- *Cassia*. *Cassia* was derived from the fragrant bark of a tree. They needed to use the same amount of *cassia* as the *myrrh*—*five hundred shekels*, the measurement *according to the shekel of the sanctuary* (12 ½ pounds or around 5.7 kilograms).
- *Olive oil*. They were to use *a hin* (about four quarts or 3.6 kilograms) of *olive oil*.

Mixing these ingredients together would produce a very fragrant aroma which would fill the tabernacle.

The ingredients described above produced a *holy anointing oil*, also called a *perfume mixture*, *the work of a perfumer*. The purpose was that *it shall be a holy anointing oil*. Moses was commanded to anoint the tabernacle and all of the furniture in it. Specifically, he was to anoint:

- *The tent of meeting* itself.
- *The ark of the testimony*, the most important item in the tabernacle.
- *The table and all its utensils*.
- *The lampstand and its utensils*.
- *The altar of incense*.
- *The altar of burnt offering and all its utensils*.
- *The laver and its stand*.

The goal was to *consecrate them* (or dedicate them by setting them apart) so that they may be most holy (meaning “completely dedicated”) and whatever touches them shall be holy. Lastly, Moses was to use the anointing oil to *anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me*. Just as the tabernacle was set apart to the LORD, Aaron and his sons were also completely set apart for serving as *priests* to the LORD. This meant that they were not to do any other type of occupation.

Verses 31 – 33 contain a warning. Moses had to *speak to the sons of Israel*. The LORD, through Moses, declared that this *oil was a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations*. The fact that it was *holy* meant that it was set apart for a specific purpose and could not be applied to any other situation. This meant that the oil could *not be poured on anyone’s body*. This probably meant that the oil could not be used for a non-religious purpose (such as being a deodorant) or anything that could be interpreted as pagan practice. What was dedicated to the LORD was not to be repurposed to any other application.

No one other than the priests were allowed to make the oil *like it in the same proportions*, meaning that no one could use the recipe in verses 22 – 24 to make their own oil. Even the recipe was *holy, and it shall be holy to you*. The final statement of this warning is the most ominous. It states that *whoever shall mix any like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people*. To be *cut off from the people* could mean excommunication from the people ([Genesis 7:14](#); [Leviticus 7:20](#) et al) or even physical death ([Genesis 9:11](#); [Exodus 9:14](#); [Numbers 15:31](#) et al).

Biblical Text:

²² Moreover, the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ “Take also for yourself the finest of spices: of flowing myrrh five hundred shekels, and of fragrant cinnamon half as much, two hundred and fifty, and of fragrant cane two hundred and fifty, ²⁴ and of cassia five hundred, according to

the shekel of the sanctuary, and of olive oil a hin. ²⁵ You shall make of these a holy anointing oil, a perfume mixture, the work of a perfumer; it shall be a holy anointing oil. ²⁶ With it you shall anoint the tent of meeting and the ark of the testimony, ²⁷ and the table and all its utensils, and the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense, ²⁸ and the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the laver and its stand. ²⁹ You shall also consecrate them, that they may be most holy; whatever touches them shall be holy. ³⁰ You shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may minister as priests to Me. ³¹ You shall speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. ³² It shall not be poured on anyone's body, nor shall you make any like it in the same proportions; it is holy, and it shall be holy to you. ³³ Whoever shall mix any like it or whoever puts any of it on a layman shall be cut off from his people.'"