

# FAQ

**FROM THE MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS ARCHIVES (2000-2018)**

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**MESSIANIC APOLOGETICS**  
messianicapologetics.net

# Frequently Asked Questions

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Cover Image: nullplus via Istockphoto

ISBN 979-8317009786 (paperback)

ASIN B09F1MWGB7 (eBook)

Published by Messianic Apologetics, a division of Outreach Israel Ministries

P.O. Box 516

McKinney, Texas 75070

(407) 933-2002

[outreachisrael.net](http://outreachisrael.net) / [outreachisrael.blog](http://outreachisrael.blog)

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# Abbreviations and Special Terms

The following is a list of abbreviations for reference works and special terms which are used in publications by Outreach Israel Ministries and Messianic Apologetics. Please familiarize yourself with them as the text may reference a Bible version, i.e., RSV for the Revised Standard Version, or a source such as TWOT for the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, solely by its abbreviation. Detailed listings of these sources are provided in the Bibliography.

- ABD: *Anchor Bible Dictionary*  
AMG: *Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament, New Testament*  
ANE: Ancient Near East(ern)  
Apostolic Scriptures/Writings: the New Testament  
Ara: Aramaic  
ASV: American Standard Version (1901)  
ATS: ArtScroll Tanach (1996)  
b. Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*)  
B.C.E.: Before Common Era or B.C.  
BDAG: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Bauer, Danker, Arndt, Gingrich)  
BDB: *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*  
C.E.: Common Era or A.D.  
CGEDNT: *Concise Greek-English Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Barclay M. Newman)  
CGL: *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (2021)  
CHALOT: *Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Holladay)  
CJB: *Complete Jewish Bible* (1998)  
CJSB: *Complete Jewish Study Bible* (2016)  
DRA: Douay-Rheims American Edition  
DSS: Dead Sea Scrolls  
EDB: *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*  
EJ: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*  
ESV: *English Standard Version* (2001)  
Ger: German  
GNT: *Greek New Testament*  
Grk: Greek  
HALOT: *Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Koehler and Baumgartner)  
HCSB: *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (2004)  
Heb: Hebrew  
HNV: *Hebrew Names Version of the World English Bible*  
IDB: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*  
IDBSup: *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplement*  
ISBE: *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*  
IVPBBC: *IVP Bible Background Commentary (Old & New Testament)*  
Jastrow: *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Talmud Yerushalmi, and Midrashic Literature* (Marcus Jastrow)  
JBK: *New Jerusalem Bible-Koren* (2000)  
JETS: *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*  
KJV: *King James Version*  
Lattimore: *The New Testament by Richmond Lattimore* (1996)  
LITV: *Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* by Jay P. Green (1986)  
LES: *Lexham English Septuagint* (2019)  
LS: *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott)  
LSJM: *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell-Scott-Jones-McKenzie)  
LXE: *Septuagint with Apocrypha* by Sir L.C.L. Brenton (1851)  
LXX: *Septuagint*  
m. Mishnah  
MT: *Masoretic Text*  
NASB: *New American Standard Bible* (1977)  
NASU: *New American Standard Update* (1995)  
NBCR: *New Bible Commentary: Revised*  
NEB: *New English Bible* (1970)  
Nelson: *Nelson's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament Words*  
NETS: *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007)  
NIB: *New Interpreter's Bible*  
NIDB: *New International Dictionary of the Bible*  
NIV: *New International Version* (1984)  
NJB: *New Jerusalem Bible-Catholic* (1985)  
NJPS: *Tanakh, A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (1999)  
NKJV: *New King James Version* (1982)  
NRSV: *New Revised Standard Version* (1989)  
NLT: *New Living Translation* (1996)  
NT: *New Testament*  
OT: *Old Testament*  
REB: *Revised English Bible* (1989)  
RSV: *Revised Standard Version* (1952)  
t. Tosefta  
Tanach (Tanakh): the Old Testament  
Thayer: *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*  
TDNT: *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*  
TLV: *Messianic Jewish Family Bible—Tree of Life Version* (2014)  
TNIV: *Today's New International Version* (2005)  
TWOT: *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*  
UBSHNT: *United Bible Societies' 1991 Hebrew New Testament revised edition*  
v(s). *verse(s)*  
Vine: *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*  
Vul: *Latin Vulgate*  
YLT: *Young's Literal Translation* (1862/1898)  
WMB: *World Messianic Bible* (2020)

# Smoking, Tobacco

## Would it be actually unkosher, and not just unhealthy, to smoke tobacco?

The tobacco plant was unknown to the authors of Holy Scripture, given the fact that it grew in the Western Hemisphere. Tobacco was thusly also unknown to the Christian world until the discovery of the Americas in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries. It is obvious throughout history since, though, that not only have Christians (including many Christian leaders and theologians of note), but Jews (including many Jewish rabbis and thinkers) the world over, have been avid smokers of pipes, cigars, and cigarettes. Many Christians in more recent history, have been firmly opposed to usage of any form of tobacco, claiming the thrust of 1 Corinthians 6:19 to support their view: “do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (NASU).

It is obvious because of all of the tobacco-related cancers diagnosed over the past century, that smoking tobacco is a serious risk to human health. Many people know of someone, and likely have close family, who have either had a tobacco-related illness or have died from either emphysema or lung cancer. Yet when one examines some of the contemporary Jewish positions surrounding tobacco usage—while smoking is not at all upheld as ideal or healthy for people—it has not been quantitatively declared an “unkosher” habit.<sup>1</sup> While those within the Jewish tradition have been divided over the issue of smoking tobacco, there is a broad opinion among many religious Jews that smoking is unhealthy, and poses some severe risks.<sup>2</sup>

People should not be encouraged to regularly smoke tobacco, as there are significant health risks associated with it. However, there is no specific reference to smoking tobacco at all in the Scriptures, so technically the Word of God does not directly condemn it as “sin.”

Because a majority of tobacco-related cancers have been widely associated with cigarette smoking—something which has often tended to occur with addicted smokers smoking multiple packs of cigarettes every day, and which does involve actually inhaling the smoke—it has been thought by some that somehow cigar or pipe smoking, which only involves puffing the smoke, is healthier. The fact is that cigar or pipe smoking can be just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes, even with the smoke not inhaled directly into the lungs. Cancers of the mouth or throat can result from cigar or pipe smoking, as the juices of the tobacco will be swallowed.

Today’s Messianic community, just like today’s Jewish Synagogue or Christian Church, will have people who smoke tobacco. This may involve people who smoke cigarettes regularly, cigars or pipes regularly, or cigars and pipes seasonally. One definitely has to reckon with the great social popularity of cigars in North America since the late 1990s, as there are religiously-themed cigar clubs. It should not be surprising that there are some Messianic congregations, if not having unofficial get-togethers where cigars are smoked, may actually have official clubs or social gatherings where cigars are smoked. For many Messianic people, because smoking tobacco—even cigars and pipes—is not officially prohibited by Scripture, think there is nothing morally wrong with it. Many Messianic people, while recognizing smoking as not being a healthy habit, would not fault someone for smoking an occasional cigar to celebrate something special, or to enjoy on a vacation or holiday.

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred J. Kolatch, *The Second Jewish Book of Why* (Middle Village, NY: Jonathan David Publishers, 1988), 285.

<sup>2</sup> Ron Isaacs, *Kosher Living: It’s More Than Just the Food* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), pp 47-48.