

~ALOE, ALOESWOOD (72)

[Hebrew, 'aha-lim' (plural) and 'aha-lohth' (plural), Greek, a-lo'e]

- A name applied to a variety of tree containing a fragrant, or aromatic, substance used as a perfume in the Biblical period.
- All your garments are myrrh and **aloeswood** and cassia, out from the grand ivory palace stringed instruments themselves have made you rejoice. (**Psalms 45:8**)
- I have besprinkled my bed with myrrh, **aloes** and cinnamon. (**Proverbs 7:17**)
- Spikenard and saffron, cane and cinnamon, along with all sorts of trees of frankincense, myrrh and **aloes**, along with all the finest perfumes. (**Song of Solomon 4:14**)
- Most commentators consider the **aloe** tree of the Bible to be the *Aquilaria agallocha*, sometimes called the **eaglewood** tree and now found principally in India and neighboring regions. The tree is large and spreading, at times reaching a height of 30 meters (100 feet).
- The inner core of the trunk and of branches is impregnated with resin and an odoriferous oil, from which comes the highly prized perfume. Apparently attaining its most aromatic state when in decay, the wood is sometimes buried in the ground to hasten the decaying process. In a finely powdered condition it is then sold commercially as **aloes**.
- The prophet Balaam's comparison of the tents of Israel with **aloe** plants that Yehowah has planted, like cedars by the waters, may relate to the spreading shape of these lofty trees, a cluster of **aloe** trees resembling an encampment of tents.
- Like torrent valleys they have extended a long way, like gardens by the river. Like **aloe** plants that Yehowah has planted, like cedars by the waters. (**Numbers 24:6**)
- This text, however, has occasioned some discussion, since the *Aquilaria agallocha* trees are not found in Palestine. Their absence today, of course, would not necessarily prove that such trees were not present in that land nearly 3,500 years ago. On the other hand,

Balaam's reference to the trees does not require that they be growing right in the area where he spoke.

- **If the cedars mentioned immediately afterward in this text were cedars of Lebanon, then they would be trees growing outside that area, and the same could be true of the **aloes**. The other texts dealing with **aloes** refer only to their aromatic qualities and would allow for them to have been foreign imports.**
- **Following the death of Christ Jesus, Nicodemus brought a roll of myrrh and **aloes** weighing about 100 Roman pounds (33 kilograms)(72 pounds), to be used in preparing Jesus body for burial.**
- **Nicodemus also, the man that came to him in the night the first time, came bringing a roll of myrrh and **aloes**, about a hundred pounds of it. ([John 19:39](#))**
- **Nicodemus contribution must have represented a considerable outlay of money on his part, although the proportion of the less expensive myrrh included in the 100 pounds is not stated. While some apply the term **aloes** in this text to the plant of the lily family that now bears the botanical name of *Aloe vera*, the product of this plant (a thick juice from the leaves) is employed not for its aroma, but as a purgative and for other health-related purposes. The **aloes** brought by Nicodemus was likely the same **aloeswood** product as that referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures.**