

Haggai 2:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said, No.

Analysis

If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be holy? (הֲיִשָּׂא־אִישׁ בְּשֵׁר־קִדְּשׁ בְּגָדוֹ וְנָגַע בִּכְנָפוֹ אֶל־הַלֶּחֶם וְאֶל־הַנֶּזֶיד וְאֶל־הַיֵּין וְאֶל־הַשֶּׁמֶן וְאֶל־כָּל־מֵאֲכָל הַיְּהִיָּה יִשָּׂא־הֵן יִיסָא־יֵשׁ בֶּסַר־קֹדֶשׁ בִּיקְנַף בִּיגְדוֹ וְנָגַע בִּכְנָפוֹ אֶל־הַלֶּחֶם וְאֶל־הַנֶּזֶיד וְאֶל־הַיֵּין וְאֶל־הַשֶּׁמֶן וְאֶל־כָּל־מֵאֲכָל הַיְּהִיָּה) —The scenario: **holy flesh** (בֶּסַר־קֹדֶשׁ/besar-kodesh), consecrated meat from sacrifice, is carried in the garment's fold. If that garment touches common food items—bread, stew, wine, oil, any food—does holiness transfer? **And the priests answered and said, No** (וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ/ vaya'anu hakohanim vayomru lo).

The principle established: holiness doesn't transfer through indirect contact. Leviticus 6:27 taught that direct contact with holy sacrifice could consecrate, but that consecration didn't extend further. Holiness is not contagious—it doesn't spread automatically to everything connected to holy things. This has profound implications: merely associating with holy people, places, or practices doesn't make one holy. Proximity to holiness isn't sufficient; personal consecration is required.

Historical Context

The priests' answer reflected established Torah teaching. The sacrificial system had complex regulations about what consecrated items and how (Leviticus

6:24-30, Exodus 29:37). The community needed this reminder because they might assume that rebuilding the temple—a holy work—automatically made them holy or guaranteed God's blessing regardless of their hearts' condition. Verse 14 will apply this principle to expose that assumption.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. In what ways are you tempted to think that proximity to holy things (church attendance, Christian community, ministry activity) automatically makes you holy?
2. How does the principle that holiness doesn't transfer indirectly challenge cultural Christianity or mere external religion?
3. What is required for genuine holiness beyond association with holy people, places, or practices?

Leviticus 7:6 (Holy): Every male among the priests shall eat thereof: it shall be eaten in the holy place: it is most holy.

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