

# 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?** (הן) ישא-איש בשר-קדש בכנף בגדי וגע בעטפו אל-פלחים ואל-פניהם ואל-שומן ואל-כל-מאנך קדש/hen yissa-ish besar-kodesh biknaf bigdo venaga bikhnafo el-halechem ve'el-hanazid ve'el-hayayin ve'el-hashemen ve'el-kol-ma'akhal hayihyeh kodesh)—The scenario: **holy flesh** (בשר-קדש/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 לֹא/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

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

## Study Questions

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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?

## Interlinear Text

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וְתַעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲنַךְ כַּאֲنַךְ כַּאֲנָשֵׁן כַּאֲנָשֵׁן  
H2005 bear If one flesh holy and with his skirt of his garment do touch  
H5375 H376 H1320 H6944 H3671 H899 H5060

שְׁמַן וְאֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
and with his skirt H413 bread H413 or pottage H413 or wine H413 or oil  
H3671 H3899 H5138 H3196 H8081

וַיֹּאמֶר וְאֶל בְּכֹה יִמְלֹךְ שְׁמַן וְאֶל בְּכֹה יִמְלֹךְ  
H413 H3605 or any meat H413 shall it be holy answered And the priests and said  
H3978 H6942 H6030 H3548 H559

לֹא :

H3808

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 23:19** (Parallel theme): Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

**Leviticus 6:27** (Holy): Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy: and when there is sprinkled of the blood thereof upon any garment, thou shalt wash that whereon it was sprinkled in the holy place.

**Exodus 29:37** (Holy): Seven days thou shalt make an atonement for the altar, and sanctify it; and it shall be an altar most holy: whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy.

**Ezekiel 44:19** (Holy): And when they go forth into the utter court, even into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments.

**Leviticus 6:29** (Holy): All the males among the priests shall eat thereof: it is most holy.

**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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