

### **Haggai 2:10-19 – Study Leader’s Questions**

1. *Haggai made two important spiritual principles by asking for the priests to clarify two rulings. What were these two rulings and how did the priests answer (Haggai 2:11-13)?*
2. *What do these questions and answers teach believers today?*
3. *How is the error of ritualism refuted in this passage?*
4. *Give phrases that indicate righteousness is not contagious (Haggai 2:10-12).*
5. *Give phrases that indicate sin is contagious. What can you do to stop sin from spreading \* in your life? \* in your family? \* in your neighbourhood, \* city, and country? \* in the world (Haggai 2:13-14)?*
6. *How can we spend time reflecting on God’s dealings with us?*
7. *How well can we identify examples of blight, mildew, and hail in daily life? What are some good techniques for identifying them?*
8. *What type of discipline has the Lord applied to our life? How can we respond?*
9. *How had God dealt with Judah’s sin (Haggai 2:15-19)?*
10. *How gracious is the Lord towards us to extend this invitation to repent and once again be in position to receive His promised blessing – despite past disobedience?*
11. *Give the phrase (Haggai 2:10-23) that reveals God is the God of second chances.*

### Haggai 2:10-19 – Answers to Questions

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *Minor Prophets Volume II Habakkuk – Malachi* pp 258-263 for detailed comment and additional information.

1. *Haggai made two important spiritual principles by asking for the priests to clarify two rulings. What were these two rulings and how did the priests answer (Haggai 2:11-13)?*

Holiness of an offering for sacrifice cannot be transferred *through clothing fabric*. When asked if it can be, ***“concerning the law”*** Haggai 2:11, the priests correctly answer no. Note Haggai 2:12 ***“his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat”*** and Leviticus 6:27 with respect to ***“the law of the sin offering”*** Leviticus 6:25.

***“Whatsoever shall touch the flesh thereof shall be holy.”***

***“bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat...shall be holy”*** only if it touches ***“the sin offering,”*** not any intervening fabric.

An individual unclean by contact with a corpse transfers uncleanness to any foodstuff that he touches. When asked if this is so, ***“concerning the law”*** Haggai 2:11, the priests correctly answer yes. The law states in Numbers 19:22 with respect to ***“He that toucheth the dead body of any man”*** Numbers 19:11 that ***“whatsoever the unclean person toucheth shall be unclean.”***

The Christian can take comfort with respect to ***“the LORD of hosts”*** Haggai 2:7 that ***“the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”*** 1 John 1:7 because ***“we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ”*** 1 John 5:20 ***“and that wicked one toucheth him not”*** 1 John 5:18.

2. *What do these questions and answers teach believers today?*

See comments above with respect to 1 John 1:7, 5:18, 20 and note Paul's admonition in Romans 6:11, revealing how the Church Age saint can conquer where Cain didn't because he did not do well according to Genesis 4:7 ***“if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire.”*** Romans 6:11 reads as follows.

***“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”***

The Christian is a corpse made dead to sin (though he still needs to reckon it, Romans 6:11) but cleansed and raised to ***“newness of life”*** Romans 6:4 by ***“the word of life”*** Philippians 2:16 and ***“the Word of life”*** 1 John 1:1.

***“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you”*** John 15:3.

***“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”*** Colossians 3:3.

***“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever”*** 1 Peter 1:23.

3. *How is the error of ritualism refuted in this passage?*

**“Then answered Haggai, and said, *So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean*”** Haggai 2:14.

Note God’s similar rebuke to Israel in Isaiah’s time, His abhorrence of their ritual in consequence and His exhortation to them to get right with Him.

**“Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward”** Isaiah 1:4.

**“Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting”** Isaiah 1:13.

**“Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; Learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow”** Isaiah 1:16-17.

Paul therefore enjoins the Christian to holiness of life in order to please God, especially with respect to relationships.

**“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?”** 2 Corinthians 6:14.

**“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty”** 2 Corinthians 6:17-18, noting the context of 2 Corinthians 6:14-18.

**“Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more”** 1 Thessalonians 4:1.

**“For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness”** 1 Thessalonians 4:7, noting the context of 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7.

4. *Give phrases that indicate righteousness is not contagious (Haggai 2:10-12).*

**“holy flesh in the skirt of his garment”** does not make holy unsanctified **“bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat”** through the skirt. It appears to this writer that the phrases have to be strung together into a sentence to answer the question.

Note that the expression **“holy garments”** occurs 11 times in scripture with respect to the Levitical priesthood; Exodus 28:2, 4, 29:29, 31:10, 35:19, 21, 39:1, 41, 40:13, Leviticus 16:4, 32. However, these garments in the first mention of the expression are said to be **“for glory and for beauty”** Exodus 28:2, not for transferring holiness.

That righteousness is not contagious in the Old Testament, even for close family members, is emphasised in these passages of scripture in particular.

**“Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it: Though these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord GOD”** Ezekiel 14:13-14.

**“Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my fury upon it in blood, to cut off from it man and beast: Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness”** Ezekiel 14:19-20, noting the context of Ezekiel 14:12-23.

The lesson for the *New Testament Church Age* believer is that ***“the righteousness of God”*** is received by an individual decision by the exercise of ***“the faith of Christ”*** Galatians 2:20. It cannot be ‘caught’ by one individual passing it to another.

**“But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference”** Romans 3:21-22.

**“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”** Romans 4:5.

**“For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”** Romans 10:10.

**“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified”** Galatians 2:16.

**“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith”** Philippians 3:8-9.

5. Give phrases that indicate sin is contagious. What can you do to stop sin from spreading \* in your life? \* in your family? \* in your neighbourhood, \* city, and country? \* in the world (Haggai 2:13-14)?

**“If one that is unclean by a dead body touch any of these...It shall be unclean”** Haggai 2:13.

**“So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the LORD; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean”** Haggai 2:14.

Psalm 51:5 describes the contagion of sin for the individual and Romans 5:12 describes the contagion of sin the world.

**“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”**

**“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”**

To combat sin:

- *For the individual, the basic strategies are:*

*Preventative Prayer*

**“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression”** Psalm 19:13.

*Restorative Prayer i.e. Confession*

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”** 1 John 1:9.

*Dead Reckoning*

**“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”** Romans 6:11. See *Question 2*.

*Flesh Denial*

**“But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof”** Romans 13:14. Don't paste a poster of a female pop star alluringly displayed on the ceiling above your bed if you are a teenage male. The writer saw this display in a Christian home visited many years ago. The female featured was Kylie Minogue.

*Temptation Avoidance*

**“Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away”** Proverbs 4:14-15. The last part cross-references well with Romans 6:11.

**“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it”** 1 Corinthians 10:13.

**“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners”** 1 Corinthians 15:33. Turn off the television. See last page for *The 23<sup>rd</sup> Channel*.

*Blood Pleading for Inner Cleansing and Purgings*

**“For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”** Hebrews 9:13-14.

**“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”** 1 John 1:7. See *Question 1* on 1 John 1:7.

See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 1608.

- For the family, the basic strategy is:

**“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”** Ephesians 6:4, so that the children can and will best obey Ephesians 6:1 **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”**

- For the rest, be salt and light as God opens doors, 1 Corinthians 16:9, adversaries notwithstanding:

**“Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men”** Matthew 5:13.

**“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man”** Colossians 4:6.

**“Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house”** Matthew 5:14-15.

**“Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain”** Philippians 2:14-16.

See the Ruckman Reference Bible p 1242.

One way to **“shine as lights in the world”** on the bigger stage is by **“holding forth the word of life”** for **“the powers that be”** Romans 13:1. This writer was able to do so by sending two letters of support to HRH the Prince of Wales, the first concerning the surreptitious photo shots of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on holiday in France in September 2012 and the second with respect to the royal couple’s recent announcement.

A grateful reply has been received for the first letter and it is anticipated that a similar reply will be forwarded for the second. The extracts from **“the word of life”** that accompanied the letters are:

**“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose”** Romans 8:28.

**“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth”** 3 John 2.

6. How can we spend time reflecting on God’s dealings with us?

The Lord’s command through Haggai is given as follows:

**“Consider from this day and upward”** Haggai 2:15. Mark well what God *has done*, Haggai 2:15-17.

**“Consider now from this day and upward”** Haggai 2:18. Mark well what *God is doing*.

**“Consider it”** Haggai 2:18. Mark well what *God has begun that He will finish*.

**“Moreover the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you”** Zechariah 4:8-9.

The Christian should aim to be like the Lord Jesus Christ with respect to being a finisher.

**“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work”** John 4:34, which should be memorised.

See [www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php](http://www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php) Haggai 1 - Consider your Ways, Question 2 on Haggai 1:5, 7 for a scriptural definition of the word “**Consider**” as this extract shows.

Note that the term “**consider**” in scripture has the sense, applicable in Haggai 1:5, 7, of N.B. nota bene or note well [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nota\\_bene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nota_bene), in order to make a detailed report to a novice. God gave the command “**Consider your ways**” so that Israel’s wrongdoing in Haggai 1 would not be repeated by “**the generation following.**”

**“Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following”** Psalm 48:13.

The answer to Question 6 lies in the principle of meditation with respect to what God has done as an encouragement with respect to what God will do and as an incentive to encourage others as Paul does, noting God’s dealings of deliverance for past, present and future circumstances. This writer can remember apprehension at the end of 1972 concerning the future. 40 years on, it could be said “**great is thy faithfulness**” Lamentations 3:23.

**“I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings”** Psalm 77:11-12.

**“Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not”** Jeremiah 33:3.

**“For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us”** 2 Corinthians 1:8-10.

7. How well can we identify examples of blight, mildew, and hail in daily life? What are some good techniques for identifying them?

Blight, mildew, and hail could be perceived as “**the works of the flesh**” that Galatians 5:18-21 identifies and lists; “**Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like**” 18 (!) in all.

Means of identification of the menace of “**the works of the flesh**” include:

- Precautionary Prayer

**“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”** Psalm 139:23-24.

- Inner conflict, resolved by going with the Spirit

**“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would”** Galatians 5:16-17.

- Doubt, which in turn means no doubt

**“...Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin”** Romans 14:22-23.

- Comparison with “**sound doctrine**” 1 Timothy 1:10

**“Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust”** 1 Timothy 1:9-11.

8. What type of discipline has the Lord applied to our life? How can we respond?

The discipline is that of a father to a son. The response should be that of a son restored to obedience to the father in living right, according to a practical application of the following scriptures.

**“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, *My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?...Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed”*** Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13.

The Lord’s discipline is applied for being “**out of the way**” Romans 3:12, Hebrews 12:13. Being “**out of the way**” even for a Christian can, for example, result in lying i.e. “**with their tongues they have used deceit**” Romans 3:13. Where deceit results in false doctrine e.g. 5-Point Calvinism, the Lord can ensure that the deceivers are “**rebuked of him.**”

See *Calvinism* [www.timefortruth.co.uk/errors-of-calvinism/](http://www.timefortruth.co.uk/errors-of-calvinism/). The item contains the following exhortation at its conclusion for anyone “**out of the way**” with Calvinism and willing to get back to “**the good and right way**” 1 Samuel 12:23 of “**sound doctrine**” 1 Timothy 1:10.

*“If you are really interested in reading about the ERRORS of Calvinism, you need to get the book ‘The Other Side of Calvinism’ by Lawrence Vance (1991)”*

See also *Hyper-Calvinism* and *Why I am Not a Calvinist* both by Dr Peter S. Ruckman.



9. *How had God dealt with Judah's sin (Haggai 2:15-19)?*

God did so mercifully because, as He said to Israel, although He struck them ***"in all the labours of your hands"*** Haggai 2:17, there was ***"seed yet in the barn"*** for planting and although ***"as yet the vine, and the fig tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you"*** Haggai 2:19 i.e. they would and each ***"bringeth forth his fruit in his season"*** Psalm 1:3.

Haggai 2:17, 19 is a timely reminder of Psalm 103:10, which has application throughout the scripture, noting the context of Psalm 103:8-14.

***"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."***

10. *How gracious is the Lord towards us to extend this invitation to repent and once again be in position to receive His promised blessing – despite past disobedience?*

See [www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php](http://www.timefortruth.co.uk/bible-studies/alan-oreillys-studies.php) Haggai 2, Part 1 – Desire of all Nations, Question 3 on the grace of God.

God is gracious according to His mercy, as set out in Lamentations 3:22-23, a passage that like Psalm 103:10, see under Question 9, applies throughout scripture. See also remarks under Question 6 with respect to Lamentations 3:23. Either or both passages should be memorised.

***"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."***

Note that for the Christian, God's *grace* to him, giving him what he *doesn't* deserve, is predicated on God's *mercy* to him, *not* giving him what he *does* deserve. Both mercy and grace are bestowed on the believer through the merits of ***"the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"*** Hebrews 3:1.

See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 1602 on mercy and grace and note Hebrews 4:15-16, of which Hebrews 4:16 should certainly be memorised.

***"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."***

11. *Give the phrase (Haggai 2:10-23) that reveals God is the God of second chances.*

The phrase is ***"from this day will I bless you"*** Haggai 2:19. However, see also Question 8 and remarks on Hebrews 12:5-7, 11-13 for getting from ***"out of the way"*** Romans 3:12 back to ***"the good and right way"*** 1 Samuel 12:23 i.e. ***"the right ways of the Lord"*** Acts 13:10.

Note also the incident of the unfruitful waste-of-space fig tree in Luke 13:7-9.

***"Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it. And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."***

Digging and dunging are no more pleasurable than chastening but if they yield ***"the peaceable fruit of righteousness"*** Hebrews 12:11 as they should, ***"It is well"*** 2 Kings 4:26.

### *The 23<sup>rd</sup> Channel*

The T.V. set is my shepherd. My spiritual growth shall want.  
It maketh me to sit down and do nothing for His name's sake, because  
it requireth all my spare time.

It keepeth me from doing my duty as a Christian, because it presenteth  
so many good shows that I must see.

It restoreth my knowledge of the things of the world, and keepeth me  
from the study of God's word.

It leadeth me in the paths of failing to attend the evening worship services,  
and doing nothing in the Kingdom of God.

Yea, though I live to be a hundred, I shall keep on viewing my T.V. as  
long as it will work, for it is my closest companion.

Its sounds and its pictures they comfort me.

It presenteth entertainment before me, and keepeth me from doing  
important things with my family.

It fills my head with ideas which differ from those set forth in the  
word of God.

Surely, no good thing will come of my life, because my T.V. offereth  
me no good time to do the will of God; thus I will dwell  
in spiritual poverty all the days of my life.