

1 Kings 12:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

Analysis

Thy father made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee.

This verse contributes to the broader narrative of kingdom divided: rehoboam and jeroboam, within the book's focus on kingdom division as judgment for Solomon's idolatry.

The Hebrew text reveals nuances important for understanding this passage's contribution to 1 Kings' theological message about kingship, covenant, and faithfulness to Yahweh. This verse demonstrates the consequences when God's people—especially their leaders—either follow or forsake the covenant established at Sinai.

Historical Context

First Kings was written during or after the Babylonian exile (6th century BCE), reflecting on the monarchy period (10th-9th centuries BCE) to explain why the kingdoms fell. The kingdom division (c. 930 BCE) created the northern kingdom (Israel, 10 tribes) and southern kingdom (Judah, 2 tribes).

Ancient Near Eastern kingship ideology viewed kings as divine representatives

responsible for maintaining cosmic order through right worship. Archaeological discoveries from sites like Megiddo, Hazor, and Samaria confirm the historical reliability of 1 Kings' descriptions of building projects and administrative structures.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How can leaders today avoid Rehoboam's mistakes and lead with wisdom rather than pride?
2. What does the kingdom division teach about the long-term consequences of generational sin and compromise?
3. How does this verse point toward or prepare for the coming of Christ and His eternal kingdom?

Interlinear Text

הַקֶּל	עַתָּה	וְאֵת	וּמַעַל	אֶת	הַקָּשָׁה	אֲבִי
upon us lighter			our yoke		grievous	Thy father
H7043	H6258	H859	H5923	H853	H7185	H1
וּמַעַל	הַקָּשָׁה	אֲבִי	תַּעֲבֹד	תַּעֲבֹד	תַּעֲבֹד	תַּעֲבֹד
our yoke			now therefore make thou the grievous		Thy father	service
H5923	H7186				H1	H5656
וְנַעֲבֹדָהּ	עַל	יְנוּ	נָתַן	אֲשֶׁר	הַכֶּבֶד	
and we will serve			which he put		and his heavy	
H5647	H5921		H5414	H834	H3515	

Additional Cross-References

1 Kings 4:7 (Creation): And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision.

1 John 5:3 (Parallel theme): For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Matthew 23:4 (Parallel theme): For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

1 Kings 9:15 (Parallel theme): And this is the reason of the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer.