

# Luke 11:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

## Analysis

**Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers** (Ὥτι φορτίζετε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους φορτία δυσβάστακτα, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνὶ τῶν δακτύλων ὑμῶν οὐ προσψαύετε τοῖς φορτίοις)—the fourth woe condemns hypocritical burden-bearing. Phortizō (lade, load heavily) describes oppressive loading of phortia (burdens) that are dusbastakta (grievous to bear, unbearable). The lawyers imposed crushing religious regulations while exempting themselves through clever loopholes.

Jesus later contrasted his burden-lifting with Pharisaic burden-imposing: 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matthew 11:30). The lawyers' regulations (handwashing, tithing, Sabbath rules) created crushing guilt without providing grace. They wouldn't prospasauō (touch with a finger) the burdens themselves—authority without compassion, law without mercy.

## Historical Context

The oral law (later codified in the Mishnah and Talmud) contained thousands of detailed regulations expanding Torah's 613 commandments into all-encompassing life control. Sabbath rules alone included 39 categories of prohibited work, each with multiple subcategories. Common people couldn't possibly observe all

requirements, creating permanent guilt and dependence on priestly/Pharisaic mediation.

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

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

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. What 'burdens grievous to be borne' might Christian legalism impose—standards beyond Scripture or cultural preferences presented as biblical mandates?
2. How can church leaders avoid the lawyers' error of imposing requirements they don't personally bear?
3. What is the difference between Jesus's 'easy yoke' and religious burdens—how does grace lighten rather than increase obligation?

## Interlinear Text

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ο δὲ εἶπεν καὶ ὑμῖν τοῖς νομικοῖς οὐαί ὅτι  
G3588 **And** **he said** **also** **unto you** G3588 **ye lawyers** **Woe** **! for**  
G1161 G2036 G2532 G5213 G3544 G3759 G3754

φορτίζετε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους φορτίοις δυσβάστακτα καὶ  
ye lade G3588 men the burdens grievous to be borne also  
G5412 G444 G5413 G1419 G2532

αὐτοὶ ἐνὶ τῶν δακτύλων ὑμῶν οὐ προσψαύετε  
ye yourselves with one G3588 fingers of your not touch  
G846 G1520 G1147 G5216 G3756 G4379

τοῖς φορτίοις  
G3588 the burdens  
G5413

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 11:52** (Word): Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

**Isaiah 10:1** (Parallel theme): Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write grievousness which they have prescribed;

**Galatians 6:13** (Word): For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.

**Isaiah 58:6** (Parallel theme): Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

**Luke 11:45** (Word): Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.