

Numbers 32:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place: and our little ones shall dwell in the fenced cities because of the inhabitants of the land.

Analysis

But we ourselves will go ready armed before the children of Israel, until we have brought them unto their place—Reuben and Gad pledge to go "ready armed" (chalutsim, חַלּוּצִים, equipped for battle, literally "loins girded") "before" (lifnei, לִפְנֵי) Israel—meaning in the vanguard, the most dangerous position. This was no token support but frontline combat leadership until conquest was complete.

"Until we have brought them unto their place" commits them to sustained warfare for years, not returning until every tribe received its inheritance. The phrase "we ourselves" (anachnu, אַنְחָנוּ) emphasizes personal commitment—not sending substitutes but going themselves. "Their place" acknowledges that while these tribes would inherit Transjordan, the true inheritance was Canaan proper. This pledge transforms their request from selfish separatism into sacrificial solidarity, satisfying Moses and demonstrating covenant loyalty.

Historical Context

Joshua 4:12-13 records forty thousand armed men from Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh crossing Jordan to fight alongside Israel. These tribes faithfully fulfilled their pledge, participating in the conquest for approximately seven years. After

Canaan was subdued, Joshua commended them for keeping their oath and released them to return to Transjordan (Joshua 22:1-6). Their faithfulness preserved national unity and demonstrated that receiving God's blessing early doesn't excuse helping others receive theirs.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 – God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 – Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does Reuben and Gad's willingness to fight for others' inheritance teach about covenant solidarity?
2. How does their pledge to take the most dangerous position (vanguard) demonstrate genuine commitment?
3. In what ways should Christians who have received God's blessings labor to help others enter into theirs?

Interlinear Text

ע ד	ישְׁרָאֵל	בָּנִים	מִפְנֵי	בְּנֵי	נָסְלָה	אָנָּחָנוּ	
But we ourselves	armed	will go ready	because	the children	of Israel		H5704
H587	H2502	H2363	H6440	H1121	H3478		

בָּאָרֶץ יְשִׁבּוּ מִפְנֵי הַמִּבְצָר בְּעָרָה וְעַל כֵּן

and our little ones cities in the fenced because of the inhabitants of the land

H2945 H5892 H4013 H6440 H3427 H776