

Numbers 32:24

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep;
and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth.

Analysis

Build you cities for your little ones, and folds for your sheep; and do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth—Moses authorizes Reuben and Gad to establish settlements east of Jordan: **build... cities** (בְּנוּ לָכֶם עָרִים benu lakhem arim) for dependents and **folds** (גְּדֵרוֹת gederot, walled enclosures) for livestock. The concluding phrase—**do that which hath proceeded out of your mouth** (הַיֹּצֵא מִפִּיכֶם אֲשֶׁר hayotze mifikem asu, 'what has gone from your mouth, do')—holds them to their commitment to fight with Israel before settling (32:16-19).

This verse demonstrates covenant principle: public commitments create binding obligations before God and community. Jesus taught: 'Let your yes be yes and your no be no' (Matthew 5:37). The tribes' verbal pledge required fulfillment regardless of subsequent preference changes. Modern casual commitments ('I'll think about it,' 'maybe') avoid accountability, but biblical community requires actionable yes/no answers with follow-through responsibility.

Historical Context

Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh requested Transjordan territories (Gilead and Bashan) because the land suited their vast livestock holdings (32:1). Moses initially feared they were repeating the spies' unbelief (32:6-15) but accepted their commitment to cross Jordan and fight alongside other tribes before returning to their east-bank inheritances.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' phrase 'do what proceeded from your mouth' challenge contemporary casual commitment-making that avoids accountability?
2. What does the requirement to fulfill spoken commitments teach about the weight and seriousness of our words?
3. How can you cultivate integrity that treats verbal commitments as binding obligations requiring faithful execution?

Interlinear Text

בְּנוּ	לְכֶם	עָרִים	לְטֹפְכֶם	וּגְדֹרְתִי	לְצֹאֲנֵיכֶם
Build	H0	you cities	for your little ones	and folds	for your sheep
H1129		H5892	H2945	H1448	H6792
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וְהָיָא		מִפִּיכֶם	וַתַּעֲשׂוּ:		
that which hath proceeded		out of your mouth	and do		
H3318		H6310	H6213		

Additional Cross-References

Numbers 32:16 (Parallel theme): And they came near unto him, and said, We will build sheepfolds here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones: