

# Proverbs 31:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction.

## Analysis

**Open thy mouth for the dumb**—The Hebrew illem (עַלְמָה, mute/speechless) describes those unable to advocate for themselves. **In the cause of all such as are appointed to destruction** translates בְּנֵי חַלּוֹף (benei chalof), literally 'sons of passing away' or those vulnerable to being forgotten/destroyed. This is the first command of the eshet chayil (חַיִל אֲשֶׁת, woman of valor) section—righteous advocacy precedes domestic virtue.

The call to **open thy mouth** (פְּתַח-פִּקְהָ, petach-pikha) means active vocal defense, not silent charity. This echoes the prophetic tradition where God demands His people speak for the oppressed (Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 22:3). Christ Himself was 'dumb before his shearers' (Isaiah 53:7) but now we must speak for those who cannot.

## Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern law codes (Hammurabi, Hittite) protected the vulnerable, but biblical law uniquely demands proactive advocacy, not just reactive justice. In Israel's patriarchal society, widows, orphans, and foreigners depended on righteous advocates to ensure covenant justice.

## Related Passages

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. Who are the 'dumb' in contemporary society who need your voice—the unborn, the elderly, the marginalized?
2. How does advocacy for the voiceless flow from the character of God who 'executes justice for the fatherless and widow' (Deuteronomy 10:18)?
3. What is the difference between paternalistic charity and the biblical call to empower the powerless through advocacy?

## Interlinear Text

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פָתַח פִּתְחָה  
**Open**   **thy mouth**   **for the dumb**   H413   **in the cause**   H3605  
H6605      H6310      H483      H1779

בָּנִים לְלִזְבָּחָה  
**of all such as are appointed**   **to destruction**  
H1121      H2475

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