

Psalm 121:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Analysis

The reassurance: Al yitten lamot raglekha (He will not permit your foot to slip). Natan (give/permit) with mot (slip/totter/waver) promises stability. Regel (foot) represents one's path, walk, conduct. Al yanum shomrekha (He will not slumber, your keeper). Num (slumber/be drowsy); shomer (keeper/guard/watcher). The answer to verse 1-2: God as keeper doesn't drowse or sleep—He maintains constant vigilance. Human guardians grow weary, but divine guardian never sleeps. This echoes 1 Kings 18:27 where Elijah mocked Baal (perhaps sleeping?), contrasting YHWH's constant wakefulness.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern deities supposedly slept, requiring morning wake-up rituals. Babylonian liturgy included morning songs to awaken gods. The Baal cycle depicts Baal sleeping in his palace. Psalm 44:23 sarcastically asks God, "Awake, why sleepest thou?" knowing He doesn't actually sleep but seemingly remains inactive. Psalm 121 positively affirms God's sleepless watchfulness. Guards on city walls took shifts because humans need sleep. God needs no relief—He never nods off, never loses alertness. Believers can rest securely knowing God's ceaseless protection.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does knowing God never sleeps affect your ability to rest and trust Him?
2. What "foot slipping" dangers require God's constant vigilance in your life?
3. How can believers cultivate awareness of God's continuous presence and protection?

Interlinear Text

אֵל | תִּתְאַנְּטוּ לְמֵעַט אֵל כִּי תְּשִׁמְרָה תְּשִׁמְרָה
H408 He will not suffer H5414 to be moved H4132 thy foot H7272 H408 thee will not slumber H5123

שִׁמְרָה:
he that keepeth
H8104

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 3:26 (Parallel theme): For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.

Proverbs 3:23 (Parallel theme): Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

1 Samuel 2:9 (Parallel theme): He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail.

Psalms 91:12 (Parallel theme): They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Psalms 127:1 (Parallel theme): Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

1 Peter 1:5 (Parallel theme): Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Isaiah 27:3 (Parallel theme): I the LORD do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

Psalms 66:9 (Parallel theme): Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

Psalms 41:2 (Parallel theme): The LORD will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies.

Proverbs 2:8 (Parallel theme): He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints.

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