

# Psalm 121:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

## Analysis

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Hineh lo yanum v'lo yishan shomer Yisrael (Behold, He neither slumbers nor sleeps, the keeper of Israel). Hineh (behold) draws attention. Lo yanum (He does not slumber); lo yishan (He does not sleep) - two verbs for sleep emphasize totality. Shomer Yisrael (keeper/guardian of Israel) identifies God's covenant role. The verse intensifies verse 3's truth: not only will God not let your foot slip (v.3), but He absolutely never slumbers or sleeps. This is characteristic divine activity toward His people—perpetual watchfulness, ceaseless care, uninterrupted protection.

## Historical Context

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Israel's history demonstrated God's watchful care: pillar of cloud/fire in wilderness (never left position—Exodus 13:21-22, Nehemiah 9:19), protection from surrounding enemies despite being outnumbered, survival through exile despite being militarily conquered, preservation through centuries of dispersion. Even when Israel sinned and faced discipline, God never completely abandoned them (Leviticus 26:44, Jeremiah 30:11, Romans 11:1-2). The sleepless keeper ensured a remnant always survived to fulfill covenant promises.

## Related Passages

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**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

## Study Questions

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1. How does God's characteristic as "keeper of Israel" apply to the church as spiritual Israel?
2. What situations tempt you to doubt God's watchful care, and how does this verse address those doubts?
3. How should God's sleepless guardianship affect your anxiety and worry?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא תִשְׁכַּח  
H2009 H3808 shall neither slumber  
      H5123

בַּכְיָה  
H3808 nor sleep  
      H3462

שׁוּם רֹאשׁ  
H8104 Behold he that keepeth  
      H3478

:לֹא תִשְׁכַּח!

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**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.

**Ecclesiastes 8:16** (Parallel theme): When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: (for also there is that neither day nor night seeth sleep with his eyes:)