

שָׁמַר

Meaning:

- To guard
- To protect
- To keep
- To observe
- To attend

The verb שָׁמַר occurs about 470 times in the Old Testament.

Examples

Used for physical guarding or protection of people or things, for example: “The LORD will keep (שָׁמַר) you from all evil; He will keep your life.” ([Psalm 121:7](#))

Also often used for keeping God’s commandments or covenant, for example, “You shall therefore keep (שָׁמַר) My commandments.” ([Deuteronomy 7:1](#))

Hebrew **כִּי יָבִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה בָּא שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל גּוֹיִם רַבִּים מִפְּנֶיךָ הַחִתִּי וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְהָאֱמֹרִי** ESV “When the LORD your God brings you into the land that you are entering to take possession of it, and clears away many nations before you, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Ca...). This usage implies not only obedience but careful, watchful attention.

Used for watchmen or people on guard duty, for example, “The LORD watches (שָׁמַר) over the city.” ([Psalm 127:1](#))

Hebrew **שָׁמַר עֶמְלֹךְ לְשֹׁמְרָיו אִם יִבְנֶה בֵּית שְׁוֹא עָמְלוֹ בּוֹנִיו בּוֹ אִם יִהְיֶה לֹא יִשְׁמָר עֵיר שְׁוֹא שְׁלֹד שׁוֹמְרָא** ESV A SONG OF ASCENTS. OF SOLOMON. Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. NIV Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain. **שָׁמַר עֵיר שְׁוֹא עָמְלוֹ בּוֹנִיו בּוֹ אִם יִהְיֶה לֹא יִשְׁמָר עֵיר שְׁוֹא שְׁלֹד שׁוֹמְרָא**

It can also mean “to keep in mind” or “to treasure up.” The equivalent Greek word for this διατήρει (e.g. [Luke 2:19](#))

Greek **ἡ δὲ Μαρία πάντα συνετήρει τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα συνβάλλουσα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς**. ESV But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. NIV But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. NLT but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.)

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