

# KEEP, guard to protect

The word: **KEEP**, in OT Hebrew: **shamar** used 468 times; in NT Greek: **tereo** used 77 times: both words mean: **to guard, to protect**.

The several pictures of English castles are related to this word. See if you can locate the part of the castle called: the **keep**.

What is the first assignment we are told the LORD God... gave in the Garden of Eden? I bet it wasn't something about quantum mechanics and the behavior of subatomic particles; it wasn't even about astrophysics and the laws of physics and chemistry to explain the birth, life and death of the universe: it wasn't writing an orchestral score in the style of a Verdi or Puccini opera; it wasn't related to examining nutrient deficiencies and supplements needed to feed the hungry, Adam didn't need those lessons; since the creation God created was very good.



The first chore God gave Adam had 2-parts; God knew he wasn't a Neanderthal -- wrong epoch; and the Lord God is a good Teacher. He chooses words His students will be able to respond to. The Lord God took Adam and put him in the Garden of Eden to **work** and to **keep** it **and guard it**, **Genesis 2:15**.

The Bible is **not** written in the language of **deists**, from the roman, latin word for **God**: who say they believe there is a Creator, but **He is not capable** of interfering with the creation He created. The Bible is written in the language of **theists**, the Greek word for **God**: who say they believe there is a Creator, and **He can interfere with His creation if He wants**.

So early in the history of Adam's race, we see the Lord gave him 2 things the Teacher knew Adam was able to manage. Unfortunately, something went terribly wrong; and Adam is sent out of the Garden to work the ground now infected with weeds, while others quite capable are sent: to **keep** / guard, the way to the tree of life -- **Genesis 3**.

Jumping over Abraham, Isaac and Jacob... they all knew this word. Moses, Aaron and the children of Israel in Egypt knew this word very well. Joshua along with the children of Israel he was assigned to lead to the promised land knew this word. The judges knew this word. Samuel the high priest knew this word. David, the beloved shepherd king of both houses: Israel and Judah... knew this word, and wrote many psalms using this word: and taught his people to sing and understand and live this word.

King David taught his sons and daughters this word. Sadly, Solomon, the smart guy greatly honored by the Lord, let his eminent position go to his fat head. In our time we have in error painted Solomon with a mythical aura. If he was the wisest man of his time... **he knew this word**: he wrote it in his Book of Proverbs, in his Ecclesiastes, the Preacher... and his Song of Solomon.

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So, did he not read his own books and just expect others to read them? Why he ignored this word, and did not guard what the Lord told His people is beyond me. His epitaph says: he played the fool, having done evil in the sight of the Lord -- **1 Kings 11**.

But let's go on... because we all have!



Many Psalms use the word: **KEEP**. **Psalm 19**: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous, more to be desired than gold, sweeter than honey; by them your servant is warned, and in **keeping** them is great reward. This psalm Abraham Lincoln carried in his pocket daily; in his 2<sup>nd</sup> inaugural address he reminds the people of the United States.

**Psalm 91**: during the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, it was misquoted by Satan who said... if you are the Son of God... blah, blah, blah... as if Satan didn't know who Jesus was; to which he got a response pounding his ears from Jesus saying: you shall not tempt the Lord your God (which sounds like Jesus said: shut the bleep up!) For He will give his angels charge over you, to **keep you** in all your ways -- **verse 11**; but don't take this verse out of context. This promise is to the one: dwelling under the shadow of the Almighty; finding their safety in the most High, their refuge and fortress.

**Psalm 122**: the 2<sup>nd</sup> psalm always sung at the Feast of Tents – celebrating the 7<sup>th</sup> great Day belonging to the Lord... those days Moses told us about. We all know the psalm:

Will I lift up my eyes to the hills? Is that where my help comes from? **No! look higher!**

My help comes from the Lord who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved. He who **keeps you**, will not slumber who **guards to protect Israel the one ruled by God**: a name that refers to father Israel, the grandson of Abraham; or to his offspring -- all those who came from him; or Messiah the ultimate Israel of God, a light to the Gentiles, their **salvation**, their **yeshua** their **Jesus**.

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He who **keeps** Israel / the one ruled by God... will not slumber nor sleep. The Lord is your keeper; the Lord will **keep you** from all evil; He will **keep** your soul; the Lord will **keep** your going and coming... from this time until forever.

And to think on this psalm, to ponder its brevity, while attempting to grasp its extent, we probably would agree: we like a God who is so concerned about us; Someone of His stature who would make a commitment to guard and protect those willing to be ruled by Him, right? To those He gladly gives His help; like a loving Shepherd to guide, He tirelessly watches over them, who desire to be ruled by Him... guarding from evil, guarding their soul, guarding their coming and their going, never abandoned by Him.

The Lord is a good Teacher; He is a consistent Teacher... He is mankind's best teacher; defining His words: till they are crystal clear; teaching by example; not complicated is it?

Isaiah and those in Jerusalem knew the word: **keep**; Jeremiah and where he went with the royal daughters to build and plant following the 10 tribes of Israel... they all knew the word: **keep**; Ezekiel and the 2 tribes of Judah exiled in Babylonian/ modern day Iraq, knew the word: **keep**; Daniel in Babylon and Persia / modern day Iran, knew the word: **keep**; the prophets Hosea, Micah, Zechariah and Malachi knew the word: **keep**;

Job, from earliest times, and Nehemiah much later, and Queen Esther in Persia: they all knew the word: **keep**; and they all taught the word, and they actually did the word.



## Fast-forward to the New Testament.

The last night Jesus spent among His people - those putting it all together what they learned 1 + 1 + 1... John leaning on His chest that night... was he still trying to figure out if Jesus was for real? because every time Jesus spoke, what He said was: out of this world. He didn't sound like the angry, loveless, stiff leaders and preachers of that time... or even those we often hear today. If Jesus sounded like all the bland frauds nowadays, then what Jesus started would have died out long before the first century ended.

The night He was betrayed, Jesus used this word: **keep**, guard, protect, **12 times**. And being the good Pastor, He knew how to preach clearly: if you love Me, **keep** My instructions -- **John 14:15**. Starting with this verse, Jesus gave His students a simple, 2-part assignment with **11** instructions and **2** sayings, sort of like He gave Adam.

What are the instructions? Simple: **1**. Love God our Father in heaven more than anything else; and **2**. Love one another. And then Jesus added: by this all will know you are My students. Not complicated, is it? No hocus pocus. Notice how the good Teacher **keeps** / guards and protects in a way that things are simple for the littlest kid to do, even one who can't spell his name.

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If you love Me, you will **keep** My words... and My Father will love you, and we will come and make a place with you -- **John 14:23**: because the Holy Spirit... who is just like Jesus, but only spirit and not physical... so unseen ... who will come and help those keep that information and the lessons and ways of thinking Jesus told his first students.

Jesus also said: He who does **not love me**, does **not keep My sayings**; and the words that you hear are not mine, but the Father's who sent me -- **John 14:24**.

Someone who is sent: who is an ambassador... speaks on behalf of the One who sends them. Jesus said: **What you heard Me say came from our Father in heaven**.

He who does **not love me**... the clear evidence being: he does **not keep** My sayings – which reveals another fact: **neither does he love our Father in heaven**... Jesus said, what He spoke are the words He was sent to deliver from His Father.

Locate in John's gospel the 12 times Jesus used this word: **keep**, and this last night did He approach each of His disciples looking them in the eye?-- **John 14-17**. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter and Jude all used the word: **keep**, teaching where they went.

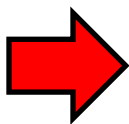
It is interesting, Mark used the word: **keep**, guard to protect... once in his Gospel, recalling when Jesus said to the envious, hardhead religious leaders of His day... who picked up stones to kill him, even so, Jesus said to them: , you reject the instructions of God, that you may **keep** your own traditions.



When you have time, read **the Letter of 1 John**... also written by John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who lived longer than any of the other 12 original students of the Lord. In his first letter, John uses this word: **keep**, guard to protect... 8 times.

Read the **Letter of Jude**... a younger half-brother of Jesus... unlike older James... Jude actually at some time joined the Lord... and was with Jesus in the upper room... the night He was betrayed. Jude uses the word: **keep**... 5 times... and each time helps us to better understand this 2-part assignment Jesus, the good Teacher gave His students.

Lastly, in the Revelation this word is used 11 times... also written by the disciple John. **Revelation 1**: hear the words of this prophecy; and **keep** what is written therein.



Now jump over 2 additional verses which use the word: **keep**, / **guard, to protect**... and go to **the church in Philadelphia -- Revelation 3:7**: To the angel of the church of Philadelphia, write; these things says He who is holy... I know your works: behold I set before you an open door... and no one can shut it: for you have a little strength, and have **kept** / guarded, to protect... **My word**, and not denied **My name**,



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**Because you have kept** / guarded, to protect... the word of My endurance, I also will **keep** / guard, to protect... you **from the terrible test which will come upon the world, to test them who dwell upon the earth.** Behold, when I come it will be sudden.

We do not keep His words, His instructions and sayings from the people; hiding the information in unknown, dead languages. We **keep**, guard to protect His words for those who have never heard.

## Who is responsible to tell these truths?

Those with knowledge are responsible to speak what they know... because information gives the ability to act in a way strong feelings and opinions do not. Dr. Dallas Willard pointed out: in any subject matter, the one who knows the information must tell it. If you know the cure for cancer... if you know the house is burning, you must share it so people can act accordingly.

But some might say: I want to sing! Good, there is a time for singing. But we can multi-task. And if the choice is between **my will** be done... or **God's will** be done... I hope we have enough sense to choose wisely. Ask yourself: are you really grateful for what Jesus did for us? Do you really love Him? Jesus said: If someone loves Me he will **keep** My words, and My Father will love him.



11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century medieval fortifications of earth and wood... were replaced with the stone **keep**... the highest, most secure place of the castle... where the royal family would live and retreat to... if intruders advanced on the castle grounds. The great siege of **Rochester castle** and **keep**... finally ended with a peace treaty... later known as the **Magna Carta**. The scene was set for a bloody civil war; roman chroniclers record that rebels garrisoned the castle at Rochester with between 95 and 140 knights, supported by bowmen and sergeants, as well as others; rebels with a cause to **keep** their new-found freedom. Without the battle at this Rochester castle and keep... the West would not have known individual liberties free from tyrannical governments.

King John had already taken possession of **Rochester castle**... the **keep** was last to fall; but under the terms of Magna Carta he was forced to hand it back into the custody of the archbishop of Canterbury in May 1215. In September the Magna Carta was annulled by the pope (Innocent III) who wrote to John announcing that the Magna Carta was "not only shameful and base, but also illegal and unjust". However, the Archbishop of Canterbury (Stephen Langton) refused to condemn the charter and was subsequently suspended from office... in other words: Rome was not pleased with Archbishop Langton (but do we care?)