

Parashat Va'e-ra- Where Is Free Will in All of This:

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Parashat Va'eira Where Is Free Will In All This

Shemoth [Exodus] 6:2- 9:35
[Shemoth [Exodus] 7:1-25]

Shemoth [Exodus] 6:2- 9:35 & Romiyim [Romans] 9:14-33, Mizmor [Psalm] 3.

Shemoth [Exodus] 7:1-25

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Yahweh sends Mosheh & Aharon To Pharaoh

Shemoth [Exodus] 7: 1-14 So יהוה said to Mosheh, "See, I have made you an Elohim to Pharaoh and Aharon your brother is your prophet. 2 "You shall speak all that I command you and Aharon your brother shall speak to Pharaoh, to let the children of Yisra'el go out of his land. 3 "But I am going to harden the heart of Pharaoh and shall increase My signs and My wonders in the land of Mitsrayim. 4 "And Pharaoh is not going to listen to you, and I shall lay My hand on Mitsrayim [Egypt] and bring My hosts, My people, the children of Yisra'el, out of the land of Mitsrayim by great judgments. 5 "And the Mitsrites shall know that I am יהוה, when I stretch out My hand on Mitsrayim. And I shall bring the children of Yisra'el out from among them." 6 And Mosheh and Aharon did as יהוה commanded them, so they did. 7 Now Mosheh was eighty years old and Aharon eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. 8 And יהוה spoke to Mosheh and to Aharon, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aharon, 'Take your rod and throw it before Pharaoh and let it become a serpent.'" 10 So Mosheh and Aharon went into Pharaoh and they did so, as יהוה commanded. And Aharon threw his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants and it became a serpent. 11 But Pharaoh also called the wise men and the practitioners of witchcraft. And they, the magicians of Mitsrayim, also did so with their magic.

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The First Two Wonders

12 And they, each one, threw down his rod and they became serpents. But the rod of Aharon swallowed up their rods. 13 And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as יהוה had said. 14 And יהוה said to Mosheh, "The heart of Pharaoh is hard, he refuses to let the people go. 15 "Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he goes out to the water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him. And take in your hand the rod which was turned into a serpent. 16 "And you shall say to him, 'יהוה the Elohim of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, so that they may serve Me in the wilderness," but see, until now you have not listened! 17 'Thus said יהוה, "By this you shall know that I am יהוה. See, I am striking the waters which are in the river with the rod that is in my hand and they shall be turned to blood, 18 and the fish in the river shall die. And the river shall stink and the Mitsrites [Egyptians] shall find it impossible to drink the water of the river.'" " 19 And יהוה spoke to Mosheh, "Say to Aharon, 'Take your rod and stretch out your hand over the waters of Mitsrayim, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds and over all their pools of water, that they become blood. And there shall be blood in all the land of Mitsrayim, both in wooden and in stone containers.'"

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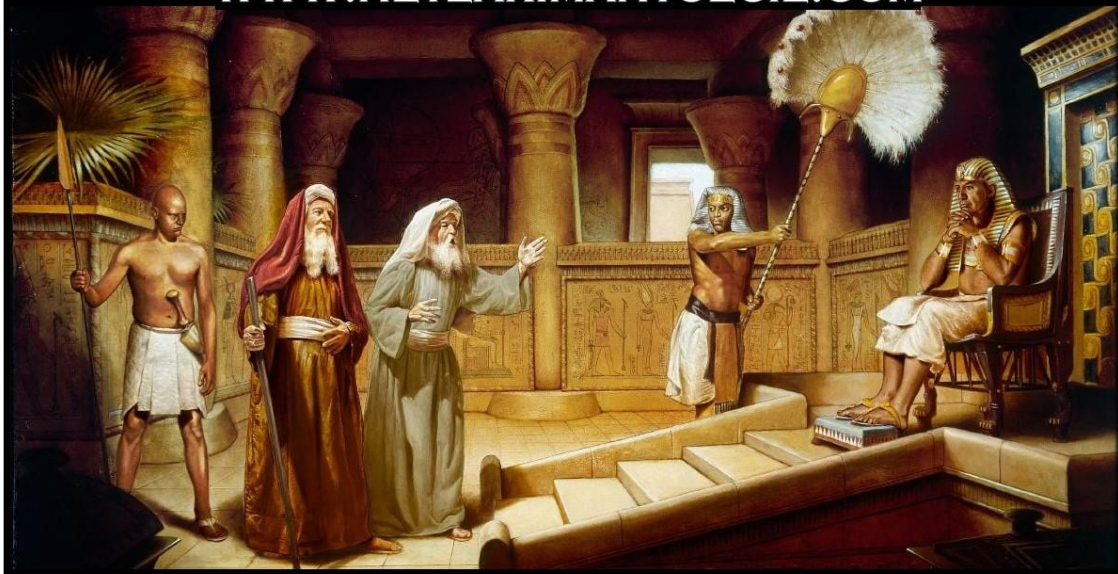
Pharaoh's Hearts Is Not Moved

20 And Mosheh and Aharon did so, as יהוה commanded. And he lifted up the rod and struck the waters that were in the river, in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of his servants. And all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. 21 And the fish that were in the river died and the river stank and the Mitsrites were unable to drink the water of the river. And the blood was in all the land of Mitsrayim. 22 And the magicians of Mitsrayim did the same with their magic. And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he did not listen to them, as יהוה had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house and his heart was not moved by this either. 24 And all the Mitsrites dug all around the river for water to drink, for they were unable to drink the water of the river. 25 And seven days were completed after יהוה had struck the river.

Introduction: Our portion this week is called "Va'eira" meaning "And He Appeared." It is interesting as it brings to us a very fundamental Question. If man has free will, then how should that be seen through the confrontation that Mosheh has with Pharaoh in the land of Mitsrayim [Egypt] or is that a question we should not ask.

The Events of Our Portion:

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1. Mosheh is instructed by YAHWEH to go before Pharaoh.

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2. Yahweh reveals to Mosheh that He will harden Pharaoh's heart so He can multiply His wonders.

The First sign of the Snake

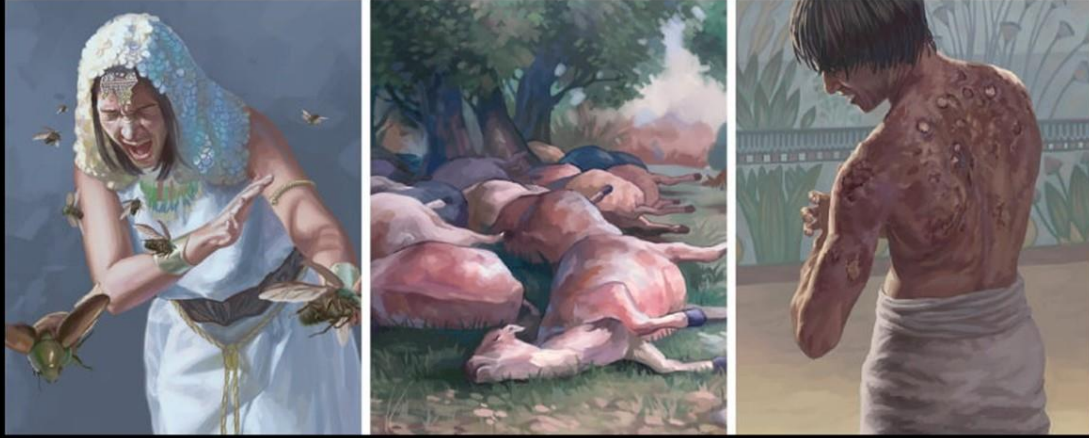


3. Aaron then casts his staff which becomes a serpent swallowing up the Magicians serpents which they conjure up.

4. The Plagues of Blood, Frogs & Lice



5. The Plagues of harmful beasts, snakes & Scorpions.
6. A plague kills cattle, followed by a plague of boils.



7. Finally we have the plague of fire blazing hail but again Pharaoh reverses his decision.



In this week's Parashat **Va'era** [& I appeared] we also come to experience YHWH hearing the cries of his people and promising to redeem them. We also saw Pharaoh's reaction by resisting seven plagues brought on by YHWH through the hand of Mosheh.

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Pharaoh resists Seven Plagues



However, in this week's readings we have a basic theological riddle. We all know that Pharaoh gets hit with a plague and then he agrees to let the Hebrews go and then he retracts his agreement. And when he retracts his agreement, he hardens his heart and yet the Torah begins in the first few plagues with Pharaoh changing his mind, but then transitions to a place where it seems that Yahweh Elohim changes Pharaoh's mind for him. And of course, the theological puzzle is: **What happens to Pharaoh's free will?** I thought it is a fundamental principle that Yahweh Elohim does not deprive humans of free will.

Word Meanings

It turns out that the Torah uses different words to describe the changing of Pharaoh's mind. **"kabad" or "qesheh"** words that mean **"to harden"**, or become **heavy** or **immovable**, the hard heart. Then we have **"chazak"**, meaning **"to make strong"**, as in strengthening the heart. You will notice immediately that one has a positive **meaning**, and one has a negative **implication**.

How Exactly Did Yahweh Elohim Harden Pharaoh's Heart?

So, one of the things we need to look at through the plagues is: which word is being used in any given plague? When Pharaoh changed his mind, is he exhibiting a kind of courage, or is he exhibiting a kind of stubbornness.

So, any given plague we also get the difference between who is doing the changing of mind. Is Pharaoh changing his own mind or is Yahweh Elohim changing Pharaoh's mind?

Pharaoh is Defiant



Did Elohim Take Pharaoh's Free Will – or Enhance It?

The way that we actually see Pharaoh's free will being enhanced is that Yahweh Elohim never actually makes Pharaoh stubborn. The only thing Yahweh would ever do is lend Pharaoh more courage to continue his fight. If I give you courage to pursue your vision, I am enhancing **[strengthening]** your free will. If you look carefully throughout our entire Parashat, you will never, ever find Yahweh hardening Pharaoh's heart meaning He never goes directly against the will of Pharaoh.

The only thing he will do is that he will strengthen Pharaoh's heart. What that seems to mean is that there is a moment where Pharaoh's courage would fail him, Yahweh gives him the courage to be able to continue to go after his own vision.

What is that vision? Ironically, that vision is defiance of Yahweh Elohim. Think of this, Elohim gives the courage to be able to defy him. Had YHWH not lent Pharaoh courage at that moment, Pharaoh would have given in, not because he would have relinquished his vision of wanting to defy Yahweh, not because he would have changed his theological mindset but simply because he had a lack of courage, he wasn't strong enough to continue.'

The True Purpose of Yahweh

Yahweh is saying "no, no, I am going to give you the strength to continue. I do not want you to give in to me out of lack of strength, I want you to give into to me because you change your vision. I don't want you to be beaten into submission; I want you to change your agenda."

So the ten plagues were a kind of education. An education of what it means for there to be a One Elohim [God] in this world. The One Elohim [God] is not looking to beat even his enemies into submission.

The Good News of Yeshua



From this concept we receive a vision into the whole purpose of the good news of Yahusha [Yeshua]. We know the law was given to show everyone what sin is & that no-one could stand before Yahweh in their own strength. However, Yahweh never wanted to use the commandments & the fear of Hell to beat mankind into submission, but, sent his beloved son to bear the sin of the World & through that transform & strengthen us to catch his vision. History does show us that the Church in many times did use the fear of Hell to cause acceptance but Yahweh even with Pharaoh did not want to apply fear but rather revelation at his wonders.

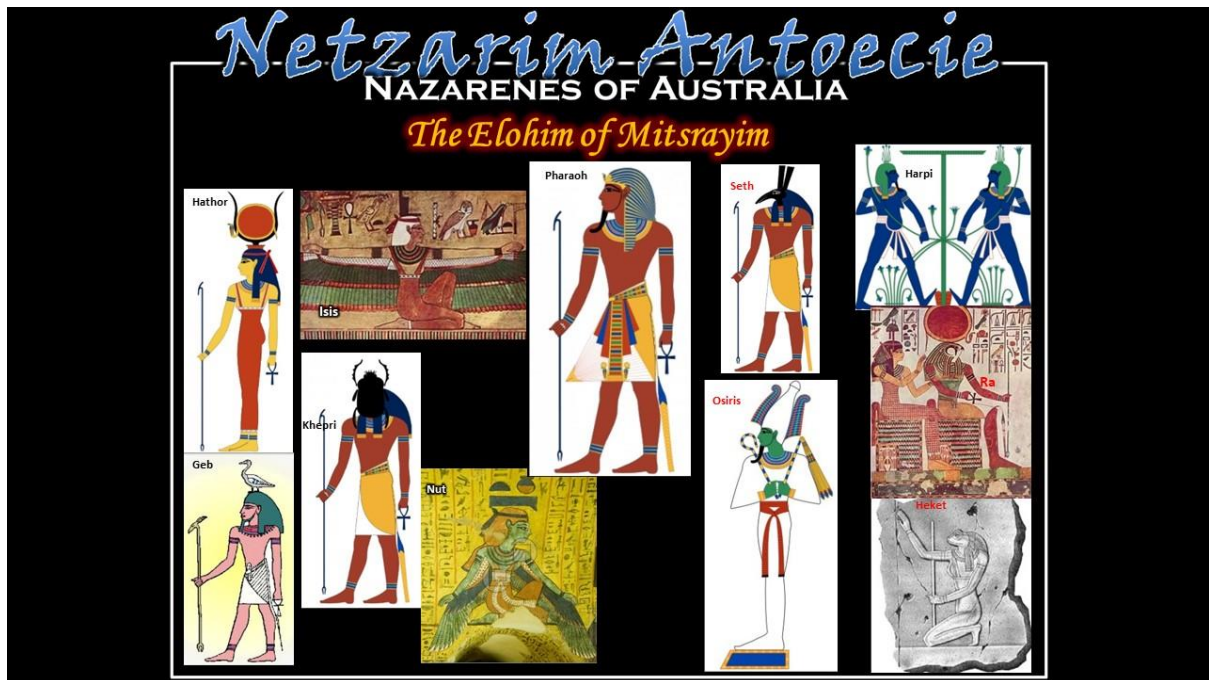
This concept is best expressed with the Words of the New Covenant found in:

Ivriim [Hebrews] 8:10 “Because this is the covenant that I shall make with the house of Yisra’ël after those days, says YHUH, I will put My laws in their mind, and I shall write them on their hearts and I shall be their Elohim and they shall be My people.

This is surely not achieved by fear & submission but by His sacrificial love. The hope then of the ten plagues is that it is a kind of education process, first for **Mitsrayim** [Egypt], and through Mitsrayim [Egypt] for the **whole world**. Why then did there need to be ten plagues?

Why bother with ten plagues? Yahweh could easily have freed the Hebrews a lot easier than that? All the power of the Universe was at his disposal, and still he was determined to take ten plagues to get the Hebrews out. Surely, He could just freeze the **Mitsrites** [Egyptians] in their place, and supernaturally transport Yisrael to the land of Canaan the promised Land.

No. There is another agenda in the ten plagues—an educational agenda. Therefore, Control over all aspects of nature, who in fact could have that sort of power?



In a polytheistic world, a world governed by many, many different Els [gods], no one El [god] holds the key to all of these forces. That only exists if there is a **Creator Elohim** [God], one force in charge of it all. Even the term Elohim can be singular meaning a mighty one of powers. Gradually, the ten plagues revealed this to be true. Pharaoh and Mitsrayim [Egypt] needed to see that. But what if they give in for the wrong reasons? What if the plagues are simply too powerful to withstand? YHWH Elohim however says, **"I'll encourage you until you realize the truth."**

This Elohim that you are battling is not just a powerful **polytheistic El** [god]. He is the One Elohim; He is the Creator. When you realize that—when you change your vision—the battle is over.

It turns out that there is a point where Pharaoh finally gets that truth, understands it and, strangely, it is not after the tenth plague; it's after the seventh one.

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The Seventh Plague of Blazing Hail



It is when hail rains down on Mitsrayim [Egypt]. But the hail is an incredibly special kind of hail. It is fire and ice together. Its **fire** encapsulated within the **ice**. If it were regular hail, you could say the ice god does not like Mitsrayim [Egypt]. If fire were raining down from heaven, you could say the sun god Ra, the fire god, does not like **Mitsrayim** [Egypt]. An alliance between the fire god and the ice god? These do not get along. Only the Creator can make peace between fire and ice. And in the wake of the plague of hail, Pharaoh responds with?

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Pharaoh Finally Concedes



Chatathi hapa'am Yahuah ha-tzadik v'ani v'ammi ha-resha-iyim,"

Shemoth [Ex] 9:27 I have sinned this time, Yahweh is the righteous one and I and my people are the wicked ones.

"Chatathi hapa'am Yahuah ha-tzadik v'ani v'ammi ha-resha-iyim,"

Shemoth [Ex] 9:27 I have sinned this time, Yahweh is the righteous one and I and my people are the wicked ones.

Yahweh the one Elohim now gave Pharaoh the strength to continue, the strength to pursue his vision so that he could yet fight on. The interesting thing is that it is not the end of the plagues, the plagues continue. Why isn't it over then? It should be over then! Pharaoh recognized the truth! Why are there three more plagues? Next week we review the last three plagues.

Conclusion:



I hope that we can now see something that is central to the Good News of Messiah in all this. His coming to Earth was never to demonstrate his power though he says all power has been given him. In fact, the mystery of the Good News is that Yahweh promises to strengthen us even when we resist him until finally, we catch his vision and desire to live our life seeking after righteousness. When we understand this teaching, we too can go to others not to threaten them with Hell fire which has been the common message throughout the ages but with the love of Yahweh & that of Yahusha [Yeshua] who gave himself for the sins of the World which is so aptly revealed in this verse:



Yahuchanan [John] 3:17 "For Elohim did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Amein.

Netzarim Ketuvim: The Romyiym [Romans] 9:14-33

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Netzarim Ketuvim: Romyiym [Romans] 9:14-33



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Is There Unrighteousness With Elohim ?

Romyiym [Romans] 9 : 14-33 What, then, shall we say? Is there unrighteousness with Elohim? Let it not be! **15** For He says to Mosheh, "I shall favour whomever I favour, and I shall have compassion on whomever I have compassion." **16** So, then, it is not of him who is wishing, nor of him who is running, but of Elohim who shows favour. **17** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this same purpose I have raised you up, to show My power in you and that My Name be declared in all the earth." **18** So, then, He favours whom He wishes, and He hardens whom He wishes. **19** Then you shall say to me, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His counsel?" **20** But who are you, O man, to talk back to Elohim? shall that which is formed say to him who formed it, "Why have you made me like this?" **21** Does not the potter have authority over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for value and another not for value? **22** And if Elohim, desiring to show wrath and to make His power known, with much patience tolerated the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, **23** and that He might make known the riches of His esteem on vessels of compassion, which He had prepared beforehand for esteem, **24** even whom He called, not only us of the Yahudim [Jews], but also of the gentiles? **25** As He says in Hoshēa too, "I shall call them My people, who were not My people, and her beloved, who was not beloved."

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The Rock Of Offense

26 "And it shall be in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' there they shall be called sons of the living Elohim." 27 And Yeshayahu [Isaiah] cries out on behalf of Yisra'el, "Though the number of the children of Yisra'el be as the sand of the sea, the remnant shall be saved. 28 For He is bringing a matter to an end and is cutting it short in righteousness, because יהוה shall cut short a matter on the earth." 29 And as Yeshayahu said before, "If יהוה of hosts had not left us a seed, we would have become like Sodom, and we would have been made like Gomorrah [Amorah]." 30 What shall we say then? That gentiles not following after righteousness, have obtained righteousness, even the righteousness of faith, 31 but Yisra'el pursuing the Torah of righteousness, has not arrived at the Torah of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as by works of Torah. For they stumbled at the Stone of stumbling. 33 As it has been written, "See, I lay in Tsiyon [Zion] a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense and everyone who is believing on Him shall not be put to shame."

The Glorious Justice & Mercy of Elohim:

Shaul [Paul] addresses the basic question that this whole teaching presents as whether Elohim is unfair or whether Elohim is unrighteous. Giving a resounding **"no"** based on Yahweh's balance of Justice and mercy but also states **"who are you to question the Creator."** In truth Salvation is not initiated by man and faith is a gift of Elohim.



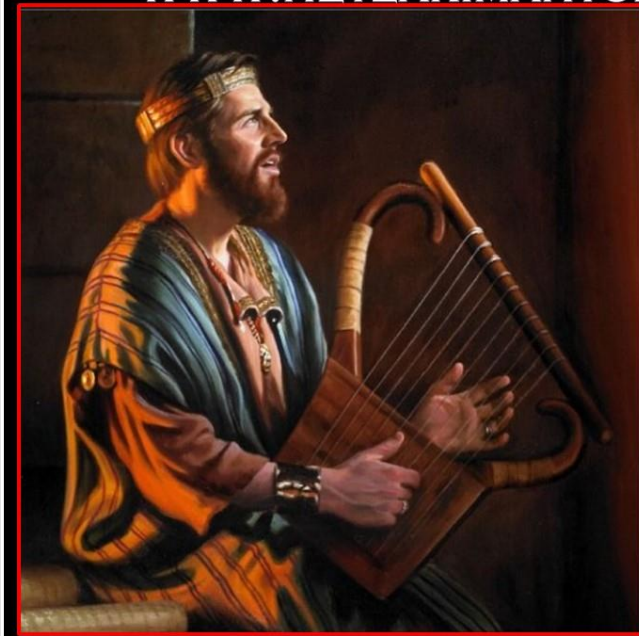
Even Yeshua says that no-one comes to him unless the Father draws him. We also saw that Pharaoh was a rebel from the beginning & Yahweh only helped him in his rebellion to demonstrate the power of the true Creator. Pharaoh was given five chances to repent but hardened his own heart before Yahweh strengthened his heart that it would stay the course to fulfil the plan of the eternal sovereign one. This process of mercy is powerfully

demonstrated by Elohim to **the Goyim** [the Gentiles] who were ripe for destruction, yet Elohim made known to them the riches of his glory with the promise that he will again turn to Yisrael in the last days. Shaul [Paul] the sent one understood the mercy of his calling & so challenges us not to question the creator of all but rather to praise Him for the mercy He has shown us by His revelation of the wonder of Yeshua the Messiah. We also find this verse which finds its place in this challenge being in:



1 Timothy 2:3-4 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of Elohim our Saviour, **4** who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Therefore it is truly in the hand of Elohim Himself to have mercy on whom He will have mercy to the praise of Yahweh & to Yeshua our Master. **Amen!**



Tehillim:
Mizmor
[psalm]
3:1-8

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Faith In Yahweh's Rescue

Mizmor [Psalm] 3:1-8 O יהוה, how my adversaries have increased! Many rising up against me.

2 Many are saying of me, "There is no deliverance for him in Elohim." **Selah.**

3 But You, O יהוה, are a shield about me, My esteem and the One lifting up my head.

4 I cried to יהוה with my voice, And He heard me from His set-apart **[Holy]** mountain. **Selah.**

5 I, I laid down and slept; and I awoke, for יהוה sustained me.

6 I am not afraid of ten thousands of people Who have set themselves against me all around.

7 Arise, O יהוה; Save me, O my Elohim!

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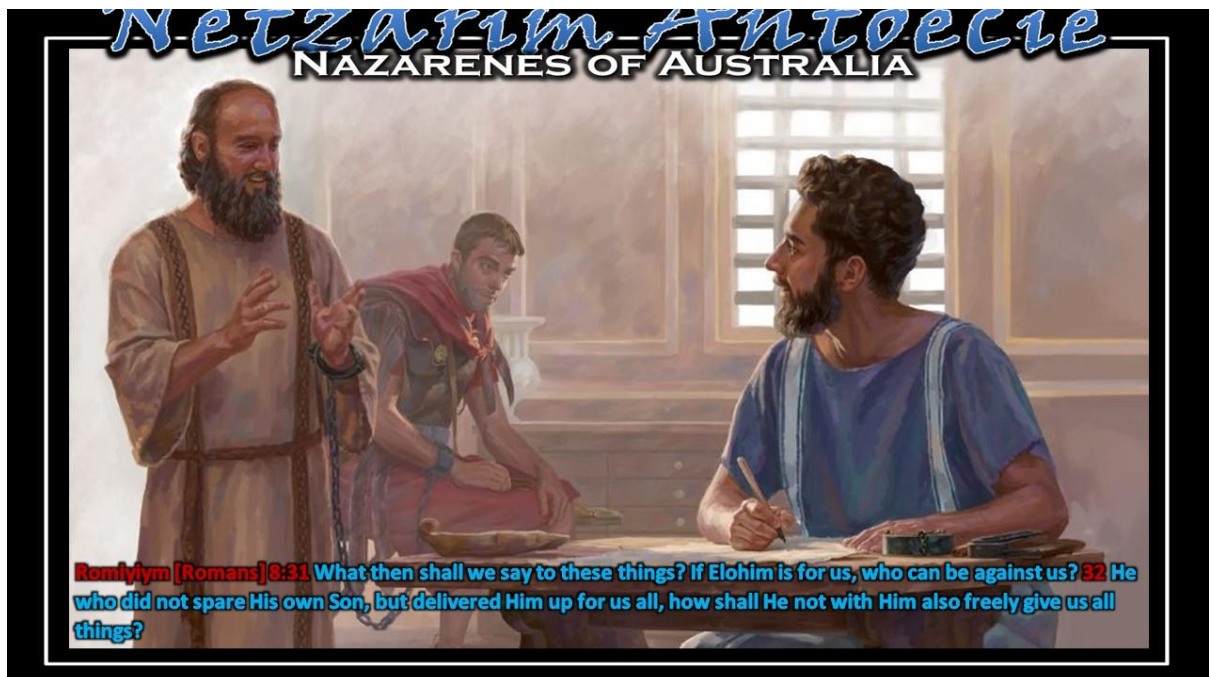
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Faith In Yahweh's Rescue

Mismor [Psalm] 3: 7b Because You have smitten all my enemies on the cheek; You have broken the teeth of the wicked.
8 Deliverance belongs to HWHY. Your blessing is on Your people.
Selah.

Faith In Yahweh's Rescue: A Psalm of David when he fled from Abshalom his son & a morning prayer of trust in Elohim.

Like with Yisrael under the harshness of slavery the Psalmist erupts with a lamentation over his boundless miseries. However, as if an about turn David launches into his faith with the strongest declaration of Elohim's sustaining protection. These thoughts we find also in the words of Shaul [Paul] in:



Romiyyim [Romans] 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If Elohim is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?

May these wonderful thoughts always sustain us through the times that try us in this world and propel us to stand strong against all foes that come to assault us. **Amen!**

Shavua Tov Aleychem!