

## The Price for Effectively Navigating the Future

<sup>18</sup>Then Judah approached him (Joseph) and said, 'I beg your pardon, my lord. Please let your servant say a word in my lord's ears, and don't be angry with your servant, since you are like Pharaoh' (Gen. 44:18).

<sup>19</sup>Repent, therefore, and return (be converted) – so your sins might be blotted out, <sup>20</sup>so times of relief (refreshing) might come from the presence of Adonai and He might (shall) send Yeshua, the Messiah appointed (preached) for you. <sup>21</sup>Heaven must receive Him, until the time of the restoration (times of restitution) of all the things that God spoke about long ago (since the world began) through the mouth of His holy prophets (Acts 3:19-21, KJV words)

I was convinced that the message *Adonai* gave me to share at the 2022 SER entitled *Kadima! Into the Times of Restitution*, was super important. I also realize that I did not deliver my very best. There are some elements that I must revisit today in my own congregation. Allow me to quote the last paragraph:

What is the point of all this discussion? If you become thoroughly convinced that *Adonai* functions in a Divine Methodology (a *Divine Torah* or *Divine Law*, so to speak), an immutable procedure that although not completely understandable by man is nevertheless immensely valuable and reliable, then you will *Kadima*. You will not become distracted by circumstances and modern ideas but will stick to His blueprint and will be able to not only explain but inspire confidence in everything you do. I told my two graduate students in Auburn in 1983 on the first day of our Bible Study that if they accepted and understood {*Eccl. 3:15.16; Mal. 3:6, Heb. 13:8 and James 1:17*} they were *caught* and would never distance themselves from Messianic Judaism and the *Methodology of Adonai*. Everything will become clear, and your *modus operandi* will always be supported by Scripture. For example, if you know what *Yeshua* liked or did as it is illustrated in the Gospels, you will then know what He would do, what He would like, what He would not do, and what He would approve of today. It is that simple! As an engineer I learned from the Laws of Physics and Electricity that as long as I stayed within their boundaries then all my designs would succeed, and I would not waste time or money. It is awesome to think that when you *Kadima* into the future you are merely navigating an already established path, His path! Hindsight is 20-20! The secret of *Kadima* is to have an accurate GPS and map. *Adonai's GPS* is better than *Google Maps*, *Garmin*, *Tom-Tom*, or anything man can design. Let us move with confidence into our destiny and prepare the world for His Return!

One of the most commonly translated words for repentance in the *Torah* is *t'shuvah*. However, the Hebrew word can more accurately be translated as *turn around and return*. In Modern Hebrew, the word *t'shuvah* means to give an answer. Thus, from a *Torah* perspective repentance is to *turn around and return and give an answer to Adonai*. This concept was clearly understood by *Yeshua's* disciples: "<sup>19</sup>Repent, therefore, and return—so your sins might be blotted out" (Acts 3:19). *Parashat Vayigash* vividly illustrates this type of repentance when Joseph's brothers return to him. When a person truly experiences repentance, they immediately realize that true repentance is a journey, and not a single event. The journey of repentance leads us to salvation (*Yeshua*). Today's *Torah Portion* demonstrates how in the process of *returning to* and *answering Adonai*, we are required to *sacrifice and forgive* in order to experience *renewal*. Scripture states clearly in *Romans 12:1-2*: "<sup>1</sup>I urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy, acceptable to God—which is your spiritual service. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed (experience a metamorphosis) by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect." *Metamorphosis* requires time!

There is a price to be paid for effectively navigating the future. What is this price? The connection between repentance, pardon and sacrifice is clearly elucidated in: "<sup>32</sup>For your servant became pledge for the boy with my father saying, 'If I don't bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before my father all my days.' <sup>33</sup>So now, please let your servant remain as my lord's slave in the boy's place, and let the boy go up with his brothers. <sup>34</sup>For how can I go up to my father and the boy is not with me? Else I must see the evil that would come upon my father!" (Gen. 44:32-34). Judah is willing to take Benjamin's place as Joseph's prisoner. Clearly this is an act of repentance for *Judah*. Recall, he was the brother who came up with the idea to sell Joseph to the *Ishmaelites*. But now his heart has returned to the will of *Adonai* and as a result, he now places the

needs of other individuals above his own. Because he wants to substitute himself for *Benjamin*, he is foreshadowing *Messiah Yeshua* who substituted His life for ours! *Judah* is concerned about the ill effects that leaving *Benjamin* in Egypt would have on his father. He is demonstrating his repentance through his works by protecting his father from the grief of losing *Benjamin*. His desire to sacrifice his own needs shows how strong his love has grown: *“No one has greater love than a person who lays down his life for his friends” (John 15:13)*. Thus, as a result of *Judah's* act of love, *Joseph* was able to reveal himself to his brothers. Are you willing to make this sacrifice so that your family or your friends can be restored? *Kadima!*

Repentance also requires forgiveness: *“<sup>1</sup>Now Joseph could no longer restrain himself in front of all those who were standing by him, so he cried out, “Get everyone away from me!” So no one stood with him when Joseph made himself known to his brothers. <sup>2</sup>But he gave his voice to weeping so that the Egyptians heard, and Pharaoh’s household heard. <sup>3</sup>Joseph said to his brothers, “I am Joseph! Is my father still alive?” And his brothers were unable to answer him because they were terrified at his presence. <sup>4</sup>Then Joseph said to his brothers, “Please come near me.” So they came near. “I’m Joseph, your brother—the one you sold to Egypt,” he said. <sup>5</sup>“So now, don’t be grieved and don’t be angry in your own eyes that you sold me here—since it was for preserving life that God sent me here before you” (Gen. 45:1-5)*. *Joseph* was willing to forgive his brothers for all the hardship, pain, and agony they had caused him for *all* those years. *Joseph's* forgiveness of his brothers made it possible to heal the division and crack open the door (avenue) that reunites his family. Healing the rift made it possible for *Adonai* to return *Joseph* to his father. As a result, all his family was able to escape the famine by living in Egypt. *Joseph's* act of forgiveness and pardon was an essential part of *Adonai's* plan to save the life of not only *Joseph* but also his brothers and ultimately his entire family. *Joseph's* forgiveness healed the wounds (notice that *Joseph* is *willing to pay* the *emotional and physical costs* of the harm done to him) and allows *Adonai's* blessings to flow to his brothers and to his father.

Repentance causes us to become renewed – to become new creations and spring into the *times of restitution!* *“<sup>9</sup>Go up quickly to my father and say to him, ‘Thus says your son, Joseph: God has made me lord over all Egypt. Come down to me. Don’t delay. <sup>10</sup>Then you’ll live in the land of Goshen, and be close to me, you and your children and your children’s children, your flocks and your cattle, and everything that belongs to you. <sup>11</sup>I’ll provide food for you there—for the famine will last another five years—otherwise you’ll lose everything, you and your household, and everything that belongs to you” (Gen. 45:9-11)*. Because *Joseph's* brothers repented and returned to *Joseph*, they are able to experience renewal. As renewed individuals the brothers were given a fresh start (*times of refreshing*), and they were given new farms and lodgings in the land of Goshen – the very best farmland in Egypt. *Joseph* also guaranteed that as renewed individuals under his protection, his family would never experience poverty.

Is it possible that we can also experience the healing of family like *Joseph* did? Yes! And it will cost you, but it is worth every penny. Repentance is an enduring process that takes our time and energy to complete. This is because heartfelt repentance requires, sacrifice, forgiveness, renewal, and restitution. The world must see that we are willing to lay our lives down. Forgiveness is required so that we do not hold grudges against individuals who have wronged us and in order that our own debts can be forgiven: *“<sup>14</sup>For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you” (Matt. 6:14)*.

Restitution, Restoration and Renewal are required so that we become the new creation we are intended to be: *“<sup>17</sup>Therefore if anyone is in Messiah, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)*. When repentance is built on the process of sacrifice, forgiveness, and renewal, it is an enduring witness of the salvation that is freely given by *Adonai* through *Yeshua* (it cost Him everything) to the world. How little in comparison is our cost compared to His eternal sacrifice? Leave here today with a made-up mind to *Kadima* so you can help restore your family. By forgiving those who have hurt you (*as a living sacrifice, which is after all, your reasonable service*), and by allowing grace (*the desire and the power*) that *Yeshua* gives us all to do His will and obey Him in everything. If you do, this will be the best New Year ever. I pray it will be so. Amen! *Shabbat Shalom!*