

~DUST (489)

- Frailty, Mortality, And Lowliness
- Representing Numerousness
- Use In God's Judgment Of Nations
- Symbolic Of Lamentation And Debasement
- Other Uses

- Fine particles of matter, light enough to be raised and borne easily by currents of air. Strong winds passing over dry desert regions, common to Bible lands, often produce violent dust storms that are considered by some to be more dreadful than storms encountered at sea.

- Volcanic eruptions, fires, and agricultural activities are among common causes of mineral dust. Vegetable matter produces dust in the form of pollen, molds, plant fiber, and seed parts.

- Animals also indirectly produce dust, resulting from dried dung, fine hair, and bacteria. The most common Biblical word for dust is the Hebrew '*a-phar*', which may also denote dry earth and clay mortar.

- As for all the wells that the servants of his father had dug in the days of Abraham his father, these the Philistines stopped up and they would fill them with dry earth. ([Genesis 26:15](#))

- And he will have the house scraped off all around inside, and they must pour the clay mortar that they cut off outside the city into an unclean place. ([Leviticus 14:41](#))

- And they must take other stones and insert them in the place of the former stones, and he will have different clay mortar taken, and he must have the house plastered. ([Leviticus 14:42](#))

- Although some may consider **dust** to be a nuisance, it is a provision of the Creator that is essential to mankind's existence and comfort. It is an important factor in the condensation of moisture in the form of rain, fog, or mist, which are vital to plant growth.

- Moreover, without the light-scattering property of atmospheric dust, the eyes of earth's creatures would be exposed to the unbearable glare of the sun's direct rays, and the familiar phenomenon of dusk and beautifully colored sunsets would cease to occur.

- The Creator used **dust** from the ground when he formed the first man.
- And Yehowah God proceeded to form the man out of **dust from the ground** and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul. (**Genesis 2:7**)
- The first man is out of the earth and made of **dust**, the second man is out of heaven. (**1 Corinthians 15:47**)
- As the one made of **dust** is, so those made of **dust** are also, and as the heavenly one is, so those who are heavenly are also. (**1 Corinthians 15:48**)
- And when Adam was sentenced for disobeying God's law, Yehowah decreed; To **dust** you will return.
- In the sweat of your face you will eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For **dust** you are and to **dust** you will return. (**Genesis 3:19**)
- God also pronounced a curse of great prophetic significance when saying to the serpent in Eden; Upon your belly you will go and **dust** is what you will eat or, bite all the days of your life.
- And Yehowah God proceeded to say to the serpent; Because you have done this thing, you are the cursed one out of all the domestic animals and out of all the wild beasts of the field. Upon your belly you will go and **dust** is what you will eat all the days of your life. (**Genesis 3:14**)

•• **Frailty, Mortality, And Lowliness**

- In view of man's fall from perfection, **dust** is sometimes used figuratively for **mankind's frailty**. God shows mercy to those fearing him, remembering that we are **dust**.
- As a father shows mercy to his sons, Yehowah has shown mercy to those fearing him. (**Psalms 103:13**)
- For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are **dust**. (**Psalms 103:14**)

- But Abraham went on to answer and say; Please, here I have taken upon myself to speak to Yehowah, whereas I am **dust** and ashes. (**Genesis 18:27**)
- It is also symbolic of the mortality of human's, for at death back to their **dust** they go.
- If you conceal your face, they get disturbed. If you take away their spirit, they expire, and back to their **dust** they go. (**Psalms 104:29**)
- For there is an eventuality as respects the sons of mankind and an eventuality as respects the beast, and they have the same eventuality. As the one dies, so the other dies, and they all have but one spirit, so that there is no superiority of the man over the beast, for everything is vanity. (**Ecclesiastes 3:19**)
- All are going to one place. They have all come to be from the **dust**, and they are all returning to the dust. (**Ecclesiastes 3:20**)
- Remember, now, your Grand Creator in the days of your young manhood, before the calamitous days proceed to come, or the years have arrived when you will say; I have no delight in them. (**Ecclesiastes 12:1**)
- Then the **dust** returns to the earth just as it happened to be and the spirit itself returns to the true God who gave it. (**Ecclesiastes 12:7**)
- Since man returns to the **dust** at death, the grave is sometimes figuratively called the **dust**.
- All the fat ones of the earth shall eat and will bow down, before him all those going down to the **dust** will bend down, and no one will ever preserve his own soul alive. (**Psalms 22:29**)
- What profit is there in my blood when I go down to the pit? Will the **dust** laud you? Will it tell of your trueness? (**Psalms 30:9**)
- The **dust** of the ground can denote a lowly condition. Yehowah is a Raiser of a lowly one from the **dust**.
- A Raiser of a lowly one from the **dust**, from the ashpit he lifts up a poor one, to make them sit with nobles, and a throne of glory

he gives to them as a possession. For to Yehowah belong earth's supports, and he places upon them the productive land. (**1 Samuel 2:8**)

- Raising up the lowly one from the very **dust**, he exalts the poor one from the ashpit itself. (**Psalms 113:7**)

• Representing Numerousness

- In the Scriptures the numerousness of people or the inability of human's to state their number is indicated by comparing them to **dust** particles. Thus, God promised Abram,
- And Yehowah said to Abram after Lot had separated from him; Raise your eyes, please, and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward. (**Genesis 13:14**)
- And I will constitute your seed like the **dust particles** of the earth, so that, if a man could be able to count the **dust particles** of the earth, then your seed could be numbered. (**Genesis 13:16**)
- Yehowah also made a similar promise to Jacob.
- And Jacob continued on his way out from Beersheba and kept going to Haran. (**Genesis 28:10**)
- And, look! There was Yehowah stationed above it, and he proceeded to say; I am Yehowah the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. The land upon which you are lying, to you I am going to give it and to your seed. (**Genesis 28:13**)
- And your seed will certainly become like the **dust** particles of the earth, and you will certainly spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south, and by means of you and by means of your seed all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves. (**Genesis 28:14**)
- Concerning the Israelites during their wilderness trek, Balaam asked; Who has numbered the **dust** particles of Jacob, and who has counted the fourth part of Israel?
- Who has numbered the **dust particles** of Jacob, and who has counted the fourth part of Israel? Let my soul die the death of

the upright ones, and let my end turn out afterward like theirs.
([Numbers 23:10](#))

- **Yehowah had greatly increased Abraham's offspring through Isaac and Jacob. Yehowah's bountiful provision of quail for his covenant people in the wilderness is indicated by the statement that**
- **And he proceeded to make sustenance rain upon them just like **dust**, even winged flying creatures just like the sand grains of the seas. ([Psalms 78:27](#))**
- **And Yehowah spoke further to Moses, saying; ([Exodus 16:11](#))**
- **I have heard the murmurings of the sons of Israel. Speak to them, saying; Between the two evenings you will eat meat and in the morning you will be satisfied with bread, and you will certainly know that I am Yehowah your God. ([Exodus 16:12](#))**
- **Accordingly it occurred that in the evening the quails began to come up and cover the camp, and in the morning there had developed a layer of dew round about the camp. ([Exodus 16:13](#))**
- **In time the layer of dew evaporated and here upon the surface of the wilderness there was a fine flaky thing, fine like hoarfrost upon the earth. ([Exodus 16:14](#))**
- **When the sons of Israel got to see it, they began to say to one another; What is it? For they did not know what it was. Hence Moses said to them; It is the bread that Yehowah has given you for food. ([Exodus 16:15](#))**
- **This is the word that Yehowah has commanded, Pick up some of it, each one in proportion to his eating. You are to take an omer measure for each individual according to the number of the souls that each of you has in his tent. ([Exodus 16:16](#))**
- **And the sons of Israel began to do so, and they went picking it up, some gathering much and some gathering little. ([Exodus 16:17](#))**
- **When they would measure it by the omer, he that had gathered much had no surplus and he that had gathered little had no shortage. They picked it up each one in proportion to his eating. ([Exodus 16:18](#))**

- And a wind burst forth from Yehowah and began driving quails from the sea and letting them fall above the camp about a day's journey this way and about a day's journey that way, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the earth. (**Numbers 11:31**)
- Then the people got up all that day and all night and all the next day and kept gathering the quail. The one collecting least gathered ten homers, and they kept spreading them extensively all around the camp for themselves. (**Numbers 11:32**)

•• Use In God's Judgment Of Nations

- Because of the nations relative insignificance from God's standpoint, he accounts them **as the film of dust on the scales**.
- Look! The nations are as a drop from a bucket, and as the **film of dust on the scales** they have been accounted. Look! He lifts the islands themselves as **mere fine dust**. (**Isaiah 40:15**)
- Yehowah's fear-inspiring power was manifested in connection with his blows against one such nation, Egypt. When the third blow was to begin, in keeping with God's command to Moses;
- Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the **dust** of the earth, and the gnats came to be on man and beast. (**Exodus 8:17**)
- When this occurred throughout Egypt, the magic-practicing priests, unable to duplicate this miracle, had to admit; It is the finger of God!
- Yehowah now said to Moses; Say to Aaron, Stretch your rod out and strike the **dust** of the earth, and it must become gnats in all the land of Egypt. (**Exodus 8:16**)
- And they proceeded to do this. So Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the **dust** of the earth, and the gnats came to be on man and beast. All the dust of the earth became gnats in all the land of Egypt. (**Exodus 8:17**)
- And the magic-practicing priests tried to do the same by their secret arts, in order to bring forth gnats, but they were unable.

And the gnats came to be on man and beast. (**Exodus 8:18**)

- Hence the magic-practicing priests said to Pharaoh; It is the finger of God! But Pharaoh's heart continued to be obstinate, and he did not listen to them, just as Yehowah had spoken. (**Exodus 8:19**)
- The Israelites, too, were told that if they failed to keep God's commandments, they could expect various maledictions, one of these being drought, for it was stated;
- And it must occur that if you will not listen to the voice of Yehowah your God by taking care to do all his commandments and his statutes that I am commanding you today, all these maledictions must also come upon you and overtake you. (**Deuteronomy 28:15**)
- Yehowah will give powder and **dust** as the rain of your land. From the heavens it will come down upon you until you have been annihilated. (**Deuteronomy 28:24**)

• Symbolic Of Lamentation And Debasement

- To symbolize their mournful lamentation over Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians in **607 B.C.E.**, the older men of the city are represented as sitting on the earth in silence, having brought up **dust upon their head**.
- The older men of the daughter of Zion sit down on the earth, where they keep silence. They have brought up **dust upon their head**. They have girded on sackcloth. The virgins of Jerusalem have brought their head down to the very earth. (**Lamentations 2:10**)
- Many years earlier, through Isaiah, Yehowah prophetically called upon Babylon to come down off her throne, saying;
- Come down and **sit down in the dust**, O virgin daughter of Babylon. Sit down on the earth where there is no throne, O daughter of the Chaldeans. For you will not experience again that people call you delicate and dainty. (**Isaiah 47:1**)
- Babylon was reduced to this low state in **539 B.C.E.**, at her conquest by the Medes and Persians. And, because of the destruction

of symbolic Babylon the Great, ship captains, voyagers, sailors, and all those making a living by the sea are depicted as throwing **dust** upon their heads and bemoaning her devastation.

- Because in one hour such great riches have been devastated! And every ship captain and every man that voyages anywhere, and sailors and all those who make a living by the sea, stood at a distance (**Revelation 18:17**)
- And cried out as they looked at the smoke from the burning of her and said; What city is like the great city? (**Revelation 18:18**)
- And they threw **dust** upon their heads and cried out, weeping and mourning, and said; Too bad, too bad, the great city, in which all those having boats at sea became rich by reason of her costliness, because in one hour she has been devastated! (**Revelation 18:19**)

••Other Uses

- **Dust** is also Scripturally linked with repentance. When Job made a retraction for talking without understanding in arguing his case before God, he said,
 - And Job proceeded to answer Yehowah and say; (**Job 42:1**)
 - Who is this that is obscuring counsel without knowledge? Therefore I talked, but I was not understanding things too wonderful for me, which I do not know. (**Job 42:3**)
 - That is why I make a retraction, and I do repent in **dust** and **ashes**. (**Job 42:6**)
- Causing foes to **lick the dust** means vanquishing them, effecting their complete subjection.
 - Before him the inhabitants of waterless regions will bow down, and his very enemies **will lick the dust** itself. (**Psalms 72:9**)
 - Nations will see and become ashamed of all their mightiness. They will put their hand upon their mouth, their very ears will become deaf. (**Micah 7:16**)
 - They will **lick up dust** like the serpents, like reptiles of the earth

they will come in agitation out of their bulwarks. To Yehowah our God they will come quivering, and they will be afraid of you. (Micah 7:17)

- Tossing **dust** into the air or throwing it at a person was a way of registering strong disapproval of him. It is a custom in parts of Asia to demand justice against a criminal by throwing **dust** on him.
- Unjustifiably enraged by certain words of Paul, a crowd in Jerusalem showed their animosity toward him by tossing **dust** into the air. Through their emotional demonstration and their words, they made their disapproval of Paul clear to the military commander.
- Now they kept listening to him down to this word, and they raised their voices, saying; Take such a man away from the earth, for he was not fit to live! (Acts of Apostles 22:22)
- And because they were crying out and throwing their outer garments about and **tossing dust into the air**. (Acts of Apostles 22:23)
- The military commander ordered him to be brought into the soldiers quarters and said he should be examined under scourging, that he might know fully for what cause they were shouting against him this way. (Acts of Apostles 22:24)
- Similarly, Shimei manifested disapproval of David's kingship by walking abreast of him that he might call down evil, and he kept throwing stones while abreast of him, and he threw a lot of **dust**.
- And King David came as far as Bahurim, and, look! Coming out from there was a man of the family of Saul's house, and his name was Shimei, the son of Gera, coming out and calling down evil as he came out. (2 Samuel 16:5)
- And he began throwing stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were at his right and at his left. (2 Samuel 16:6)
- And this is what Shimei said as he called down evil; Get out, get out, you bloodguilty man and good-for-nothing man! (2 Samuel 16:7)
- Yehowah has brought back upon you all the bloodguilt for the

house of Saul in place of whom you have ruled as king, and Yehowah gives the kingship into the hand of Absalom your son. And here you are in your calamity, because you are a bloodguilty man! (2 Samuel 16:8)

- Finally Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king; Why should this dead dog call down evil upon my lord the king? Let me go over, please, and take off his head. (2 Samuel 16:9)
- But the king said; What do I have to do with you men, you sons of Zeruiah? Thus let him call down evil, because Yehowah himself has said to him; Call down evil upon David! So who should say; Why did you do that way? (2 Samuel 16:10)
- And David went on to say to Abishai and all his servants; Here my own son, who has come forth out of my own inward parts, is looking for my soul, and how much more now a Benjaminite! Let him alone that he may call down evil, for Yehowah has said so to him! (2 Samuel 16:11)
- Perhaps Yehowah will see with his eye, and Yehowah will actually restore to me goodness instead of his malediction this day. (2 Samuel 16:12)
- With that David and his men kept going on in the road, while Shimei was walking on the side of the mountain, walking abreast of him that he might call down evil, and he kept throwing stones while abreast of him, and he threw a lot of **dust**. (2 Samuel 16:13)
- Jesus Christ instructed his disciples that when anyone failed to receive them or listen to their words, they were to shake or wipe the **dust** off their feet upon leaving that house or that city.
- This practice served for a witness against them, implying that Jesus followers were peacefully departing and leaving that house or that city to the consequences that would come from God.
- Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving, and stay there until you leave. (Matthew 10:11)
- When you are entering into the house, greet the household. (Matthew 10:12)

- And if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it, but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. (**Matthew 10:13**)
- Wherever anyone does not take you in or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that **city shake the dust off your feet.** (**Matthew 10:14**)
- Truly I say to you, it will be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city. (**Matthew 10:15**)
- And wherever people do not receive you, on going out of that city **shake the dust off your feet** for a witness against them. (**Luke 9:5**)
- But wherever you enter into a city and they do not receive you, go out into its broad ways and say; (**Luke 10:10**)
- Even the **dust** that got stuck to our feet from your city we wipe off against you. Nevertheless, keep this in mind, that the kingdom of God has come near. (**Luke 10:11**)
- I tell you that it will be more endurable for Sodom in that day than for that city. (**Luke 10:12**)
- But the Jews stirred up the reputable women who worshiped God and the principal men of the city, and they raised up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas and threw them outside their boundaries. (**Acts of Apostles 13:50**)
- These shook the **dust off their feet against** them and went to Iconium. (**Acts of Apostles 13:51**)