

From Dust to Kingship

By Walter Brueggemann

(Eden Theological Seminary, 475 E. Lockwood Ave., Webster Groves, Missouri)

Recent studies have suggested an intersection in the motifs of covenant-making, enthronement, and resurrection. J. Wijngaards¹, has suggested that "dying and rising" is a way in which the voiding and renewal of covenant is described. Moreover, to "turn" or "repent" means to change loyalties or enter into a new covenant. He suggests² that this way of speaking is illuminating for the New Testament discussion of the resurrection of Christ. John H. Hayes³ has studied the resurrection traditions of the New Testament and has shown that they are built with reference to the royal ritual of enthronement in Israel's ritual practice:

In summary, the earliest Christology was based on an interpretation of the Resurrection as Jesus' enthronement as the Messiah in the heavenly sphere at the right hand of God. It was in his ascension that he was truly "raised up". Such an interpretation was dependent upon an eschatological, messianic exegesis of certain Old Testament passages (especially Ps 110:1-2 and II Sam 7) which reflected the Davidic royal theology.⁴

On this same general theme, C. Barth⁵ has examined the coming of God in covenant renewal as a new beginning "on the third day". He pays particular attention to the Sinai texts and Amos 4 and Hos 6. His study advances the suggestions of Wijngaards concerning new perspectives on the New Testament meaning of resurrection. The important gain of these studies is the recognition that the motifs of covenant-renewal, enthronement, and resurrection cannot be kept in isolation from each other but they run together and serve to illuminate each other.

I.

The present discussion arises out of a study of the J materials in Gen 2—3 in which it is affirmed that man is formed from the dust of the ground (2:7) and that he is dust and will return to the dust (3:19). It

¹ Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos 12), VT 1967, 226—239.

² Ibid. 238f.

³ The Resurrection as Enthronement and the Earliest Church Christology, Interpretation 1968, 333—345.

⁴ Ibid. 345.

⁵ Theophanie, Bundschließung und neuer Anfang am dritten Tage, EvTh 1968, 521 bis 533.

is, of course, possible to take these statements in an unimaginative way as an explanation of the physical composition of man, as an affirmation that man is at one with the soil and without the presence and power of Yahweh he is not distinct from all the rest of the earth. But if the statement is not fully comprehended in such a sense, other possibilities present themselves.

The present study was led in the direction of royal language by the use of *dust* in I Reg 16 2 in which the enthronement of Baasha is reported:

Since I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel...

And then the antithesis is stated:

Behold I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house.

Here also a man is taken from the dust. Only here the language clearly is not to be understood in a primitive or literal sense. Rather it is terminology used to speak of the elevation of a man to royal office. "Dust" is used to describe his pre-royal status, which apparently means he is a "nothing", without identity or importance. The antithesis of "dust" in this text is kingship (*nagid*), a position of power and importance. The conclusion of v. 8 affirms that Baasha can return to his pre-royal status which has been described as "dust".

The premise of this paper is that the formula of enthronement in I Reg 16 2-8 is the clue to the meaning of the J statements. Thus:

I Reg 16 2 I exalted you	the Lord God formed	
out of the dust = Gen 2 7	man of dust from	= Gen 3 19 you are
	the ground	dust
16 8 I will utterly sweep		
away Baasha and his =	_____ = 3 19	to dust
house		you will
		return

Behind the creation formula lies a royal formula of enthronement. To be taken "from the dust" means to be elevated from obscurity to royal office and to return to dust means to be deprived of that office and returned to obscurity. Since the royal office depends upon covenant with the appropriate god⁶, to be taken from the dust means to be accepted as a covenant-partner and treated graciously; to return to the dust means to lose that covenant relation. Thus the terminology is very close to that suggested by Wijngaards. To die and be raised

⁶ See Ph. Calderone, *Dynastic Oracle and Suzerainty Treaty*; II Samuel 7 8-16, 33f. and passim, as well as D. N. Freedman, *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation*, Interpretation 1964, 426.

is to be out of covenant and then back in covenant⁷. So also to be "from dust" is to enter covenant and to return "to dust" is to have the covenant voided. "Dust" is not to be taken literally but as a figure for being out of covenant, impotent and unimportant, or as Wijngaards has suggested, "dead". The dramatic movement of dust to life to dust (Gen 2 7 3 19 I Reg 16 2-3) is in fact imagery describing the fortune and standing of the royal occupant.

This way of understanding the figure is supported by the poetry of I Sam 2 6-8a⁸:

The Lord kills and brings to life;
 he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
 The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
 he brings low, he also exalts.
 He raises up the poor from the dust;
 he lifts the needy from the ash heap,
 to make them sit with princes and inherit a
 seat of honor.

The word pairs of these verses suggests the reversal which is evidenced in I Reg 16 1-3:

kill—bring to life
 bring down—raise up
 make poor—make rich

The verses speak of being nothing and then being given a place of power and importance, or conversely, being in a place of power and importance and suddenly losing it all. Following Wijngaards' suggestion, the word pairs speak of the status of being in covenant and then out of it. And because the language is of royal treaty, we may suggest that being in covenant means having royal power and authority and being out of covenant means losing it. On the one hand it is to be "in the dust". On the other, it is to "sit with princes". The phrase "from the dust" appears here also as a formula relating to enthronement. Finally we should note that the unit ends with creation allusions:

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's
 and on them he has set the world (v. 8b).

If the formula is for enthronement, then it is natural that the poetry moves immediately to talk about the stability that belongs to creation because of an established king. Sound kingship leads to healthy

⁷ So Wijngaards op. cit. 232ff.

⁸ This passage as well as Dtn 32 39 has close affinities with Hos 6 3 of which Wijngaards has written. See Albright, Samuel and the Beginnings of the Prophetic Movement (Goldenson Lecture 1961), 26.

creation. From such a conclusion, the combination in Gen 2 of creation and taking Adam from the dust is easily understood, for Gen 27 in fact speaks of the process whereby a nobody is entrusted with the powers and responsibilities of kingship.

A fourth text, Ps 1137 should be mentioned here. It calls for little comment because it corresponds closely to I Sam 28-8:

He raises the poor from the dust,
and lifts the needy from the ash-heap.
To make them sit princes,
with the princes of his people.

What has been said above concerning I Sam 2 applies here also. A new factor is the new figure for reversal in v. 9:

He gives the barren woman a home,
making her a joyous mother of children.

This would seem to be an abrupt change of imagery. However, when it is recalled that fertility is a primary concern of the monarchy⁹, that barrenness is a manifestation of curse or being out of covenant, then the images of 1) elevation to kingship, 2) restoration of covenant, and 3) giving of new life all intersect at this point. The contrast of royal power and barrenness is evident in II Sam 621ff.:

And David said to Michal,
It was before the Lord who chose me above your father,
and above all his house, to appoint me as a prince over Israel . . .
And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

Ps 113 is closely related to the other texts in contrasting "dust" with the power and authority belonging to kingship¹⁰.

The four texts, Gen 27 I Sam 28-8 I Reg 162-3 and Ps 1137, all speak of being raised from dust to power, a formula which makes best sense if it is understood as an enthronement formula. Each of the four speaks of a surprising reversal for the person involved:

Gen 27 "formed . . . of dust from the earth (*yīṣār . . . 'apar min-ha' 'adamā*) to care for the garden."

I Sam 28-8 "raised from the dust (*meqim me'apar*) to sit with princes."

I Reg 162 "raised from the dust (*h^arimotika min-ha' 'apar*) to be a leader over Israel."

Ps 1137 "raised from dust (*meqim me'apar*) to sit with princes."

The verbs in the last three (*h^arimotika*, *meqim*) easily correspond to Wijngaards' study on giving life and entering covenant. The other

⁹ On the Ugaritic evidence for kingship with reference to fertility, see A. L. Merrill, *The House of Keret*, SEA 1968, 5-17.

¹⁰ Merrill *ibid.* argues persuasively that kingship has as its task fertility, salubrity and sovereignty.

verb, *yīšær*, is not so visibly connected with the same phenomenon. However, Reventlow¹¹ in his careful study of Jer 14-10 has shown 1) that *yšr* is closely related to installation in an office (ordination, enthronement) and 2) that this passage is closely related to royal theology. He notes especially the parallels in the salvation oracle of Jes 44 24f. and the servant songs and in the royal psalm of Ps 26-7. The evidence is sufficient to warrant the conclusion that in Gen 27 *yšr* functions exactly as *qām* and *rām* in our other three passages. All four refer to establishment of a covenant which guarantees to the vassal a position of power and authority which is equivalent to royal status. Thus to take a man from dust is to enthrone him in a special position by the favor of the covenant suzerain. The language is of course clear in I Reg 16 which concerns a king. In I Sam 2 the poem ends in v. 10 with the same affirmation:

He will give strength to his king
and exalt the power of his anointed.

There can be no doubt that this also is enthronement language. By inference from the context, the man formed in Gen 27 is also entrusted with the authority of kingship (cf. v. 19). Von Rad¹² in commenting on v. 19 rightly says: "Name-giving in the ancient Orient was primarily an exercise of sovereignty, of command." He suggests it "stands close to 1 28b in this affirmation". That the man of the J narrative is king is now clear from this interpretation of 27. The language there is as clear as in the other three uses.

II.

If the image of dust refers to the status of a nobody before he gains the power of the throne and the status of a nobody when he has lost his throne, as I have argued above, then we may understand other uses of the figure in what must have been originally royal settings.

1. The figure is used in two laments which appear to be derived from royal theology. First in Ps 22, a lament which clearly has connections with the royal cult, the position of weakness and humiliation employs the same figure:

My strength is dried up like a potsherd
and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
Thou dost lay me in the dust of death (v. 16).

The cluster of symbols describes a person who has lost his capacity to function. The mention of "potsherd" (*hrš*) may be reminiscent of the

¹¹ Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia 24—45.

¹² Genesis 81.

same imagery which called for the verb *ysr* in Gen 27. The total picture is a man of faith and power who has had it taken from him and now is helpless and desolate¹³.

A like lament though one step removed from royal theology is found in Ps 44 26:

For our soul is bowed down to the dust;
our body cleaves to the ground.

Here the poetry apparently speaks of community rather than king, but the image functions in the same way, namely, to describe the situation of weakness and misery when the covenant seems not to function properly. To be in the dust means to have the relationship with Yahweh fractured and consequently to suffer (cf. v. 14-17).

2. Conversely the imagery is used in Ps 76 in a lament as part of an oath of innocence:

If I have done this,
If there is wrong in my hands
If I have requited my friend . . .
let him trample my life to the ground
and lay my soul in the dust.¹⁴

The assertion of innocence made either by a king or some other speaker means the risk of everything he has and is on his innocence. To lay "my soul in the dust" means the undoing of all power and authority. It is not clear that this example is royal in a direct sense, but the imagery suggests that in the first instance the line means "take everything from me and let me return to that pre-power situation"¹⁵.

3. This imagery which surely originated in the royal cult came to be used in other contexts to speak about the various facets of the covenant relation. In the great hymn about the Torah, the life-giving power of the Torah is affirmed:

My soul cleaves to the dust;
revive me according to thy word (Ps 119 25).

The verse speaks of helplessness or deadness of the speaker. It affirms that a great reversal from dust to life can happen if the word of

¹³ H. Gese, ZThK 1968, 1 ff., has interpreted Ps 22 as a process, perhaps liturgic, by which the kingdom breaks in and *šalôm* is restored. Thus the movement from "dust" in v. 16 to "enemies in the dust" in v. 20 represents a reversal consistent with our theme.

¹⁴ Here as in many other places 'apar and 'arāš are a common parallel as S. Gevirtz, Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel, 38, has noted.

¹⁵ A. Johnson, Sacral Kingship, 125 ff., has suggested a way of understanding this action on the part of the king. His thesis is of course open to question but it offers one possible interpretation.

Yahweh is granted to the speaker. The imperative verb "revive" (*ḥayā*) is the same of which Wijngaards writes concerning covenant restoration. Thus dust = no covenant; life = covenant. A closely paralleled affirmation is found in Ps 198:

The Torah of the Lord is perfect,
restoring the life.

Both texts (Ps 119²⁵ 198) express complete confidence that it is Yahweh's Torah (covenant law) which changes a man's situation from death to life, or as our image has it, from dust to life. The restoration of the *nəpəš* from dust is not without parallel in Gen 27 in which bringing Adam from dust forms him a living *nəpəš*, i. e., following Wijngaards, one fully in covenant with all the implications of that for health and power.

A second interesting use of the image is in Ps 104^{29f.} in which creation motifs are most apparent:

When thou takest away their breath,
they die and return to their dust.
When thou sendest forth thy breath,
they are created;
and thou renewest the face of the ground.

Covenant and creation here are closely related. The language is that of creation. The vocabulary closely parallels that of the P narrative. But the intention is to speak of covenant. When there is good relation, i. e., under Torah, then there is revived *nəpəš*; when relations deteriorate, there is dust and death¹⁶.

4. The motif is also handled so that it appears in an assurance of confidence:

Let him set alone in silence
when he has laid it on him;
let him put his mouth in the dust —
there may yet be hope;

¹⁶ I am suggesting then that creation is the enthronement of man as faithful regent of his covenant Lord. In: David and His Theologian, CBQ, 1968, 177f., I have correlated this more closely with the kingship of David. Here it is important at least allude to the meaning of creation in the Enuma Elish. There also man is made from the earth and there also it happens in the context of enthronement. But as A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, 118—122, has suggested, a different perspective informs the narratives. In the Enuma Elish, man is formed to serve the gods. In Gen 2, he is formed to be the king of the garden. Here the sharp contrast in theological orientation is apparent: "In the Babylonian stories man's creation is told from the viewpoint of the gods while in Genesis it is told from the viewpoint of man" (ibid. 122). Thus our identification of creation and enthronement depends upon the particular notion of man held in Israel by which older creation narratives were transformed.

let him give his cheek to the smiter
and be filled with insults (Thr 3 28-30)¹⁷.

The dust imagery is here one of three in which it is affirmed that suffering and humiliation can be endured, because the faithful know that being in the dust is not the last thing. There is more to be hoped for — and in our context, the more would seem to be elevation out of the dust back to a situation of stability and wholeness, indeed even “glory” (Thr 3 18). This piece of poetry means to affirm that a great reversal for the better can be anticipated when those in dust again receive “glory”. This is confidence that “resurrection” is intended by God toward his faithful.

These texts then in a variety of ways illuminate the “dust” image to show that it speaks of healthy covenant relations which result in life and those which to the contrary bring death. It seems clear that if the formula is primarily for enthronement (cf. above on I Reg 16 1-8), then the royal nuances may continue, even when the image has been extended to encompass all the moods of Israel’s faith.

III.

A special usage of the dust motif occurs when there is a wish or a promise that “we” should triumph and conversely, those who oppose us should be destroyed or subjugated. Because we are dealing with harsh political realities, it is most often true that the success of Israel’s royal power depends upon the elimination of a rival or threat. Simply put, Israel’s king can be raised from the dust to power only when the alternative rulers are sent to the dust¹⁸.

Thus part of the hope for elevation out of dust is the wish or promise that the others will go to the dust. This is apparent in Psalms which clearly have to do with the monarchy:

They cried for help, but there was none to save,
they cried to the Lord, but he did not answer them.
I beat them fine as dust before the wind;
I cast them out like the mire of the streets (Ps 18 42f.).

¹⁷ N. Gottwald, *Studies in the Book of Lamentations*, 47—62, has spoken of the “recurring theme of reversal”. While it is negative in *Lamentations*, the same motif is possible in the other direction, i. e., from death to life, from dust to power. See also *Sfire Stela III*, Donner-Röllig, *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften*, 222 C 11. 23f.

¹⁸ This more “political” interpretation of Psalms has been especially urged by Birke-land, *The Evildoers in the Book of the Psalms*, and Würthwein, *Erwägungen zu Ps 73*, in: *Festschrift für A. Bertholet*, 532—549.

May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth!
May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust!

May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!
May all kings fall down before him,
all nations serve him (Ps 72 9-11)!

Yea, to him shall the proud of the earth bow down;
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,
and he who cannot keep himself alive (Ps 22 29)¹⁹.

The first of these has the king narrate in the first person concerning his conquests. In the second, the form is one of prayer or wish for the monarchy. In the third it is Yahweh himself who receives dominion and honor and not an earthly king, in what is a salvation oracle after a lament. The forms differ and the circumstance of expression changes in each of them. But they are agreed on a central point. The well-being and elevation of the king (or in Ps 22, Yahweh himself) depends upon the subjugation of the opposition. The precise function of "dust" varies; in Ps 18, it describes their scatteredness; in Ps 72, it speaks of their humiliation and in Ps 22 it is humiliation which approaches death. But each of them regards this destiny for the enemy as an essential part of the process by which the king receives dominion over the realm. Gese²⁰, in his study of Ps 22 describes the movement of the Psalm from anticipation of the kingdom to its full coming. Note that in v. 30, the ones in dust cannot keep *nəpəš* alive. This again corresponds to the formula of Gen 27 and illuminates Wijngaards study on life and covenant. The wish for the enemy to be in the dust is the counterpart of the enhancement of the king who moves from death to life in its rich, powerful royal form.

The other texts which concern us here take the form of prophetic proclamation which either declares how it now is or how it is going to be because of Yahweh's action:

The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
they shall lay their hands on their mouths;
their ears shall be deaf;
They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
like the crawling things of the earth . . . (Mi 7 16f.).
Come down and sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of Babylon;

¹⁹ Here is the other side of this Psalm, as suggested above in connection with the thesis of Gese.

²⁰ Op. cit.

Sit on the ground without a throne,
 O daughter of the Chaldeans!
 For you shall no more be called tender and delicate (Jes 47 1).

Thus says the Lord God: . . .
 Kings shall be your foster fathers,
 and their queens your nursing mothers.
 With their faces to the ground they shall bow down to you,
 and lick the dust of your feet.
 Then you will know that I am the Lord;
 those who wait for me shall not be put to shame (Jes 49 22f.).

These passages call for little comment. The great inversion is under way. For Israel and her King to come up out of the dust, the others enter the dust. The reversal consists in the dead one coming to life and the live ones being destined for death. When Israel's king is fully empowered, the status and reputation of the other would-be powers quickly disappears. To sit in the dust or to lick the dust means to be without any of the factors which make a royal presence visible and effective.

One other text from Second Isaiah which concerns us is the statement about Cyrus in 41 2:

Who stirred up one from the east whom victory meets at every step?
 He gives up nations before him,
 so that he tramples kings under foot;
 he **makes** them like dust with his sword,
 like driven stubble with his bow.

Here the contrast between dust and kingship is readily apparent. Cyrus is king, therefore his enemies are dust. He has life, they have death. He is in covenant with Yahweh, the enemies are not. And when they are not, they are destroyed or at least subjugated.

Two texts finally, from a context commonly thought to be later, utilize the same theme:

For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trodden down in his place, . . . And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground, even to the dust (Jes 25 10-12).

Trust in the Lord for ever,
 for the Lord God is an everlasting rock.
 For he has brought low
 the inhabitants of the height, the lofty city.
 He lays it low, lays it low to the ground,
 casts it to the dust (Jes 26 4-5).

In both of these, again the great reversal is affirmed in which the low are exalted from the dust and the exalted are brought down to the

dust. Here the royal imagery has been extended so that the whole people now share in the promise and hope of the royal tradition²¹.

This series of texts then, in several distinct forms, makes use of the dust theme which we have examined in the royal formula, to speak about the great reversal which comes in history because Yahweh is Lord. Consistently the theme affirms that the low are made high and the high are brought low. This of course is faithful to the texts which are closest to the royal formula, i. e., Gen 27 I Sam 2 6-8 I Reg 16 1-3 and Ps 113 7.

IV.

John H. Hayes had studied some New Testament texts exploring the relation between resurrection and enthronement²². Here I will work from the other direction but with the same interrelation in mind. It is a common assertion of the handbooks that in only two texts in the Old Testament is the affirmation of resurrection clearly affirmed. It came as a surprise to note that in both these texts, the motif of dust plays a prominent role:

The dead shall live, their bodies shall rise.

O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!

For thy dew is a dew of light,

and on the land of the shades thou wilt it fall (Jes 26 19).

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan 12 2).

The first of these belongs in the larger literary complex we have already cited in connection with Jes 25 12 26 5, with its strong emphasis upon the future and of course Daniel serves as a source of hope in a time of great despair. There is no doubt that in some sense the two verses speak of resurrection. But the question is: what precisely is intended by the allusion? Under the influence of conventional exegesis in the New Testament, we are popularly predisposed to assume that the texts refer to a man (or men) coming up out of the grave. But in light of the dust motif we have been studying, it is cogent to suggest that this really is reference to the great reversal which happens in history when dust gives way to kingship, when the lowly are exalted and the lofty are brought low. Thus it is faithful to the earliest form of the motif in which it refers to a nobody being given royal office with all the power and privilege related to it.

²¹ Cf. Eißfeldt, *The Promises of Grace to David in Isaiah 55 1-5*, in: *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. by Anderson and Harrelson, 196—207, who traces the process by which a dynastic promise is shared by the whole community.

²² See above, note 3.

The promise of the texts then is not that there will be a departure from the graves, but rather an affirmation that in the movements of history, the "nobodies" will be given great power and the people who now seem to have all the power will not really count in that moment of reversal. Because historical context is very difficult to determine, it is hazardous to identify any particular historical crisis for Jes 26 19. The case with Dan 12 2 is of course more obvious. But in both cases, the affirmation is a strong conviction that in history where Yahweh presides the forces of pride and arrogance and ruthlessness cannot finally prevail. Finally Yahweh's will for his people will out²³. It is vouched for in all of Israel's history and certainly in his act of Gen 2 7 whereby a nobody is made the king of the garden. Unfortunately, we have taken these two texts so literally and physically that we have missed the point that the poetry affirms a vigorous faith about Yahweh's intention of reversing history for the sake of his people.

The study of the texts in this sequence lead to some rather remarkable conclusions. The clearest text we have is that of I Reg 16 1-3 which is without a doubt an enthronement formula. This I take it is the fundamental meaning of the dust motif. Yahweh in his power does take ordinary men and empower them as his king. The life and career of David is a most brilliant example of that reality. From this enthronement formula it is possible to reason both backward and forward.

When one reasons backward, he moves from the formula of I Sam 2 8-8 and I Reg 16 1-3 to the text of Gen 2 7. There it is affirmed that a living *napeš* is from the dust of the ground. Now if this is not to be taken as a literal description, then the creation formula is to be understood as a new handling of enthronement. Adam, in Gen 2, is really being crowned king over the garden with all the power and authority which it implies. This is the fundamental statement about man made by J. He is willed by God to occupy a royal office. And when he lives in this relationship he knows life. When he violates or transgresses that relationship, he comes to understanding the meaning of death. Thus the narrative of Gen 3 fits well with Wijngaards' statement on life and death. The creation formula, supported by I Sam 2 8b, makes the connection between kingship and creation. *Thus creation of man is in fact enthronement of man.*

When one projects forward to the formula of resurrection we have cited in Jes 26 19 and Dan 12 2, we see that the enthronement formula of I Reg 16 1-3 is again employed, though of course with quite different intentions. Now the one from the dust is regarded as dead and the

²³ Confidence in Yahweh to effect this great reversal is of course fundamental to the faith of apocalyptic, in which context Is 26 19 and Dan 12 2 are usually studied.

action of Yahweh makes him alive²⁴. But in light of the observations of Wijngaards and the above, it is clear that death and life mean covenant and in our context royal or dynastic covenant. Thus *the resurrection of Israel is in fact the enthronement of Israel* among the nations.

Enthronement as an historical experience thus becomes the anchor and clue to understanding the *protological* enthronement of man (creation) and the *eschatological* enthronement of man (resurrection) so prominent in Biblical faith²⁵. We have misread both statements because of our literalism. Gen 2 7 has not been seen as an enthronement formula because we have been too busy worrying about the literal meaning of the text. And so also Jes 26 19 Dan 12 2 have not been seen as enthronement formulae because we have expected something else in light of the later faith of the Church. Being delivered from our literalism and doctrinal categories we are able to affirm that creation-enthronement-resurrection is all of a piece. They affirm that God will his human creatures to live life with all the power and privilege, the authority and responsibility which rightly belongs to a king.

V.

In our study of the motif of dust, a remarkable number of times the motif is employed by the poem of Job; so much so that it warrants special comment. The critical questions relating to Job are, of course, difficult and unsolved, and this paper makes no attempt to deal with them. Suffice it to note that the figure of Job does have royal dimensions and if the frequent dating in the exilic period could be sustained, we may have hints at the reaction of monarchy to the loss of all things monarchal. But that is only a suggestion. My point rather is the deep anxiety and doubt apparent in the poem which questions the entire creation-enthronement-resurrection sequence which appears to dominate Israel's faith. In Job these same motifs are used, but turned so that they protest against conventional faith. The poet has Job deny the gift of life and power, his very humanness, if it must be lived on present terms. In so doing the poet seems to very carefully utilize older motifs.

We may begin with two texts which appeal to creation motifs. The first which celebrates man in Ps 8 is now inverted:

²⁴ The restoration formula of Luke 15 24 makes sense in this context. Cf. K. H. Rengstorf, *Die Re-Investitur des Verlorenen Sohnes in der Gleichniserzählung Jesu* Luk. 15 11-32.

²⁵ The term "protological" to balance the word "eschatological" I have learned from Prof. James Muilenberg.

What is man, that thou dost make so much of him,
and that thou dost set thy mind upon him

and it ends:

For now I shall lie in the dust;
thou wilt seek me, but I shall not be (Hi 7 17-21).

The man who could be dominant and celebrated rather anticipates a pre-royal status in which he is a nobody, i. e., he doesn't exist at all. Thus dust is again the antithesis of royal humanness.

The other text repeats the verdict of Gen 3 19:

Remember that thou hast made me of clay
and wilt thou turn me to dust again (Hi 10 9)?

The J writer had already suggested that man lives between his times of clay and they are only for the moment of obedience. Now the poem asks if Yahweh will indeed execute that plan. Will he in fact take this marvelous creature "the work of thy hands" (v. 8), and return him to dust again? The J verdict was clear and now the poet fears the same, though with incredulity.

The image of dust is used in Job as an image for death, but it is not just the death of "sleeping with one's fathers" which the tradition had been able to accept. Rather it is the death of non-being, the profound anxiety for self-worth and self-identity which strikes deeper than the older royal texts had struck:

For there is hope for a tree,
if it be cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease.
Though its root grow old in the earth,
and its stump die in the dust,
yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth branches like a young plant.
But man dies, and is laid low;
man breathes his last, and where is he (Hi 14 7-10)?

Answer: Nowhere.

He will perish forever like his own dung; . . .
He will fly away like a dream, and not be found;
he will be chased away like a vision of the night . . .
His bones are full of youthful vigor,
but it will lie down with him in the dust (Hi 20 7-11).

One dies in full prosperity
Another dies in bitterness of soul
They lie down alike in the dust,
and the worms cover them (Hi 21 23-26).
all flesh would perish together,
and man would return to dust (Hi 34 15).

This way of speaking about human life is fully aware of the imagery of Gen 3 19. It knows that man has been raised from nothing to a noble position of power and splendor. But whereas the J traditions wish to talk about that part of the process by which man is raised from nothing to something (what I have called creation-enthronement-resurrection) the Job poetry moves on to the next part of the process by which the negative side of the imagery becomes important. Already in I Reg 16 1-3 we have seen that whom God raised from the dust he can return to the dust. Job takes the first part for granted but is intensively concerned that in his experience the second step is underway. He is, by the action of God, on his way back to his previous condition. And if the creation-enthronement-resurrection imagery is correct, then we may formulate a parallel pattern of destruction-deposition-death. Whereas the former was an action for a moment in the graciousness of God, the latter is a permanent action from which there is no relief. Whoever is the subject in the poem (Job, king, man, Israel) must now learn to live in a context in which the forces of destruction are in ascendancy, in which he has been removed from his position of power and in which hope for covenant renewal (resurrection) is problematic²⁶. Such a way of handling the dust motif helps us discover the real pathos of the poem. Something has gone awry in which it is not possible for man to live as his tradition invited him to.

How does one respond to that context for living? There are several suggestions in Job, but one concerns our motif and has not been fully explored:

God has cast me into the mire,
and I have become like dust and ashes (31 19).

therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes (42 6).

The first of these is a description in typical lament form of the situation in which the speaker finds himself. The second is apparently an acceptance of that context as a place in which faith and life can somehow be worked out. The former taken alone sounds simply like bitterness. The second can be interpreted, like Terrien for example, in a very positive light. Together they speak of the difficult situation in which a person of faith must live. The phrase expresses resignation and

²⁶ The *Angst* which Terrien, *Job, Poet of Existence*, 133ff., has found in the poem illuminates the point of the present discussion. The subtlety of the question is put by Terrien, p. 153:

. . . Job is breaking the age-long Hebraic reluctance to accept life eternal but he is not yet stating the later conception of the resurrection of the flesh as a gift of rebirth by the God who creates life . . . He merely knows that death will not be the end and that he will be brought at last before the very face of the Divine.

hostility, but it also expresses trust. This is a legitimate and meaningful posture in which to live. The formula is reminiscent of Gen 18 27 in which Abraham speaks:

Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the Lord,
I who am but dust and ashes.

The man still exists, he can still address the deity, but now he speaks no longer in mood of pride and demand, now only one of hopeful entreaty which moves in the direction of faith.

These motifs, like the very mood of the poem of Job are in turmoil and in conflict with each other. They express a struggle to explore the meaning of personhood in which man is more than dust; he has been created, enthroned, resurrected, but he may not presume upon it. It is the gift of a gracious powerful sovereign who never yields his own sovereignty. And the man who would live in that covenant of life (Adam, Abraham, Baasha, Job) can choose death by his presumption. It may be the death of annihilation, of deposition, of abandonment. In any case, it is not the life promised to the first man (Gen 2 7) nor to the last man (Jes 26 19), for that life means covenant and man can include himself out, as Job had done, even while thinking himself in.

The struggle of Job is a formidable and serious one. And perhaps it is in the struggle that life is found. But in Koheleth the struggle is abandoned, the richness of the imagery is forgotten and there is an resignation to things which must be:

For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; As one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; for all is vanity. All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again (Koh 3 19f.).

. . . man goes to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets . . . and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity (Koh 12 5-8).

This is the counterforce in Israel's faith. It does not believe that man is enthroned, that he can be king. It does not believe there is more to it than an episode in the dust.

But Israel's central faith tradition did affirm there is more than an episode in the dust. It affirmed that this episode is what it is all about. To be sure, it is precarious and one cannot presume upon it. But man is not bound simply for dust. He is not the same as the animals in his destiny. He is more trusted and more accountable than that. He is for the time being made king over the rest of it. The in-breaking of that realization in Israel is indicated in Gen 2 7. This is not simply a primitive story of how man came to be. It is building an

anthropology out of royal ritual and it affirms that man is bound for kingship. On this ground Israel came to talk meaningfully and seriously about the resurrection of which enthronement is a foretaste.

V.

In light of this study, we may add a word about the Pauline understanding of resurrection in I Cor 15 48-49:

As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven²⁷.

If "heaven" here be understood as the kind of elevation of man which applies equally to resurrection and enthronement, then the passage follows the motif of dust faithfully. As "death" expresses both the dust motif and also broken covenant, then "victory" (v. 57) speaks of being raised out of the dust the kingship as well as the restoration of the covenant. We need not explore here the details of the passage other than to note that the creation-enthronement-resurrection²⁸ motif greatly illuminates this passage. The Christological affirmation is simply that it is the Lord Jesus who summons man to this other status for life²⁹. The question of Biblical faith is always whether our self-understanding is informed by the dust or by those incredible events which have given new options for humanness³⁰.

²⁷ The term for "dust" *choikos* is used here four times and is used nowhere else in the New Testament nor in the LXX. (The standard term for "dust" *chous* is widely used but not in this passage.) The unique usage here suggests the passage is of particular importance. The phrase "man from the earth" is clearly reminiscent of Gen 2 7. Moreover *choikos* is used in Sybliné Oracles 8, 445 with explicit reference to Adam, so that the connection cannot be doubted. (Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, 891).

²⁸ The relation of resurrection and ascension in the New Testament merit comment at this point. The tradition of ascension has, of course, been recognized as a coronation narrative (Cf. Hayes).

It is only in Luke-Acts that both resurrection and ascension are reported. Often resurrection is mentioned alone. At other times, only the ascension is reported. The line of reasoning we have followed here suggests that both or either may be concerned with the enthronement of Jesus and those who are in his company. For that reason, it is not so important to separate or distinguish the two traditional affirmations. Both witness to the same conviction, that Jesus was acknowledged as king. I am grateful to my colleague, Prof. Richard L. Scheef, Jr., for this suggestion.

²⁹ The "life" to which men are called is elsewhere referred to as "eternal life" i. e., a royal powerful life in contrast to the dust of death. It has often been asserted that "eternal life" refers to quality and not extension. Perhaps here there is a basis for the quality of kingly life.

³⁰ The exploration of this theme concerning Gen 2 7 and "man from dust" may greatly illuminate the role Röm 5 12-21 in the central portion of that letter (Röm 5 8). Now it

The entire ministry of Jesus (cf. Luke 4 18-19 19 1-10) is calling men from dust to kingship. That is why his ministry was so frightening and threatening to some and why he had to be eliminated: because he upset the arrangements between the kings and the nobodies. It is also why Easter-event is so crucial for the faith of the early Church, for it dramatizes the movement from dust to kingship. In this it is faithful to the affirmation already made by J in Gen 27.

Die Inthronisationsformel in I Reg 16 1-8 liefert einen Schlüssel für das Verständnis anderer Verwendungen der Worte «aus dem Staub erheben». Da es sich offenbar um eine Krönungsformel handelt, legt der ähnliche Satz Gen 27 die Annahme nahe, daß die Schöpfungserzählung des Jahwisten von der Inthronisation des Menschen und die Bekräftigung der Auferstehung durch Paulus in I Kor 15 48f. von der Inthronisation Christi handeln. Sowohl Schöpfung als auch Auferstehung werden als Inthronisationshandlungen verstanden.

La formule d'intronisation contenue en I Reg 16 1-8 nous donne une clef pour la compréhension d'autres usages de l'expression «relever de la poussière». S'agissant de toute évidence d'une formule de couronnement, on peut présumer, étant donnée l'expression semblable en Gen 27, que le récit Yahviste de la création traite de l'intronisation de l'homme et que l'affirmation par Paul de la résurrection, en I Cor 15 48s., est aussi celle de l'intronisation du Christ. Création tout comme Résurrection sont ainsi envisagés comme des actes d'intronisation.

may be seen that pericope does not stand in isolation, but in fact stands as the focus in the witness that "we were buried" and may "walk in newness of life" (64). Throughout this section, Paul asserts what Gen 27 claims, the Gospel that man can be raised from dust — death, slavery — to share in the life of the raised, exalted one. The central Pauline teachings take on fresh meaning in such a context.



Copyright and Use:

As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.

No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.