

# Job 30:19

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes.

## Analysis

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Job laments his condition: "He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes." The verb *yarah* (יָרָה, "cast") means to throw or hurl forcefully. The noun *chomer* (חֹמֶר, "mire") denotes clay or mud. Job describes himself as reduced to "dust and ashes" (*aphar va'epher*, אֶפְרָר וְאַפָּר)—the very phrase he'll use confessing human frailty before God (42:6). From a Reformed perspective, Job's description reveals the humiliation suffering brings while anticipating his ultimate posture before God. The phrase "dust and ashes" occurs at key moments: Abraham's self-description before God (Genesis 18:27) and Job's final repentance (42:6). Job's lament ironically prepares him for proper perspective—recognizing creatureliness as the foundation for meeting God. Philippians 2:5-8 describes Christ's similar descent, taking the form of a servant and humbling Himself—voluntary self-abasement that leads to exaltation.

## Historical Context

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Dust and ashes symbolized mourning, repentance, and human mortality throughout ancient Near Eastern cultures. Sitting in ashes expressed grief (2 Samuel 13:19), while dust represented human origin (Genesis 2:7, 3:19). Job's description uses creation imagery (clay, dust) to express how suffering reduces humans to their elemental state, stripping away dignity and status.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does suffering strip away pretense and reveal our fundamental creatureliness?
2. What is the relationship between Job's enforced humiliation and the voluntary humility required to meet God?
3. How does Christ's voluntary descent to humiliation transform the meaning of our suffering and lowliness?

## Interlinear Text

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הֵךְ נִי	לִי מֶר	וְאֶתְמַשׁ ל	כְּעָפָר	וְאַפָּר:
He hath cast	me into the mire	and I am become like	dust	and ashes
H3384	H2563	H4911	H6083	H665

## Additional Cross-References

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**Job 42:6** (Parallel theme): Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

**Job 9:31** (Parallel theme): Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.

**Genesis 18:27** (Parallel theme): And Abraham answered and said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes: