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FAIRMormon Conference

Arise from the Dust: A Rich Book of Mormon Theme







**Dust from the Stars**



# Dust: An Important Ancient Motif

- “Rising from the dust” in the Book of Mormon and the Bible is an important theme rich in meaning.
- Dust is the beginning of Creation and the end of mortality.
- Modern biblical scholarship shows rising from the dust relates to covenant keeping, resurrection, enthronement, & life.
- Understanding the complex of dust-related themes in the Book of Mormon reveals added meaning and helps solve some mysteries in the text.



# Dust/Earth Also Important in China



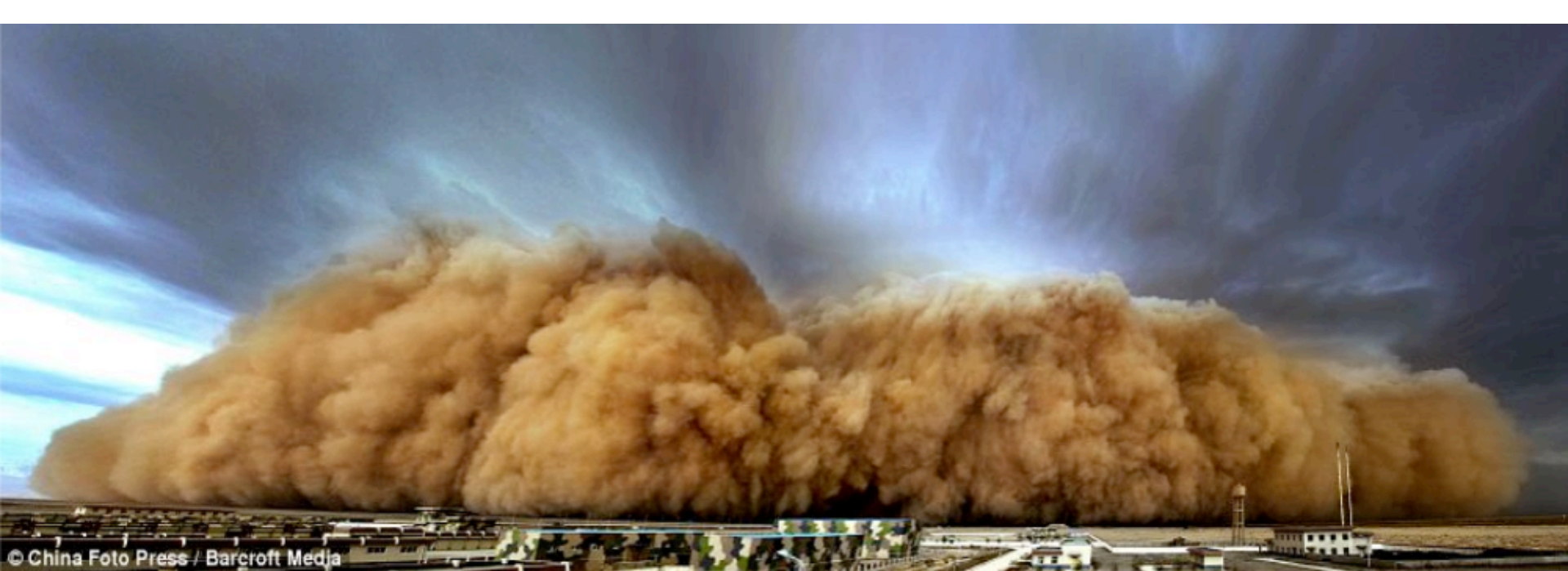
## Elements of China

EARTH  
(color of the emperor)  
Anal: Human  
Season: Center  
Saturday

Media, "Wu Xing,"  
'wiki/Wu\_Xing

# Yellow Dust, Yellow River, Yellow Sea

- The dust of China is often yellow, as in the Yellow River & Yellow Sea, colored by the yellow silt.





# A Study Sparked by Noel Reynolds

- In “The Brass Plates Version of Genesis,” Reynolds finds impressive links between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon, suggestive of Book of Mormon dependency (not the other way around)
- Motivated by Reynolds’ work, several other possible links between the Book of Moses and the Book of Mormon were explored.
- Curiosity about the striking imagery of “chains of darkness” in Moses 7 led to some finds shared here.
- Three papers at *The Interpreter*:  
<https://tinyurl.com/arisedust1>, [arisedust2](https://tinyurl.com/arisedust2), [arisedust3](https://tinyurl.com/arisedust3).
- Reynolds’ paper: [tinyurl.com/arisedust4](https://tinyurl.com/arisedust4)

# Noel Reynolds on the Book of Moses

<b>Group 1: Concepts not directly found together in the KJV Bible</b>		
<b>Concept</b>	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Book of Mormon</b>
transgression-fall, fall-death	Moses 6:59	2 Nephi 9:6
order-days-years-eternity	Moses 6:67	Alma 13:7
Lord-from all eternity-to	Moses 7:29	Mosiah 3:5; Mosiah 8:18
God-gave-man-agency	Moses 7:32	2 Nephi 2:16
Lord's Spirit-withdraws-from-man	Moses 1:15	Alma 34:35; Helaman 4:24, 6:35, 13:8, Mosiah 2:36
children-whole-from foundation	Moses 6:54	Moroni 8:8, 12
only name-given-salvation*	Moses 6:52	Mosiah 3:17
devil-father-of all lies	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:18; Ether 8:25; 2 Nephi 9:9
devil-lead-captive-his will	Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 2:27; Alma 12:11, 40:13;
devil-deceive-blind-lead	Moses 4:4	3 Nephi 2:2
lies-lead-well-deceive-eyes	Moses 4:4	1 Nephi 16:38



# Exploration: Do More Parallels Exist?

- The Strength of Moses?
  - ▣ Nephi's puzzling comment (1 Nephi 4:2): "Therefore let us go up; let us be *strong* like unto Moses"
  - ▣ The OT credits many with strength, but not Moses
  - ▣ A surprise in Moses 1:25:  
"Blessed art thou, Moses, for I, the Almighty, have chosen thee, and *thou shalt be made stronger than many waters.*"



# Fifteen More Parallels Proposed

- Reynolds used computer searching for exact phrases.
- By considering concepts rather than specific words, other possibilities arise.
- After the strength of Moses, the next parallel explored was “chains” + darkness/hell/Satan in *Moses* 7:26, 57.
  - ▣ “he beheld Satan; and he had a great chain in his hand, and it veiled the whole face of the earth with darkness” (26)
  - ▣ “the remainder were reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day” (57)
  - ▣ Several parallels were uncovered, beginning with 2 Ne. 1:23
- Then several more were found.



# Chains: Links Between Our Two Texts

- Intrigued by “chains of darkness” in the Book of Moses, I searched for that phrase.
- Not found in the Book of Mormon.
- But 2 Nephi 1:23 links “obscurity” with chains (Webster, 1828: “Darkness; want of light” is 1<sup>st</sup> definition).
- There may be a Hebrew wordplay there as well: perhaps Nephi used the root *‘aphar* (עפר) or *‘epher* (אפר) for “dust” and *‘ophel* (פֹּלֵא) for “obscurity.”



<b>Concept</b>	<b>Book of Moses</b>	<b>Book of Mormon</b>
The strength of Moses	Moses 1:20–21,25	1 Nephi 4:2
Chains of darkness, chains of hell, chains of the devil	Moses 7:26,57	2 Nephi 1:13,23; 2 Nephi 9:45, 28:19,22, Alma 5:7,9,10, 12:6,11,17, 13:30, 26:14–15, 36:18
Song of redeeming love/ everlasting joy, contrasted with chains of darkness/hell	Moses 7:53–57	Alma 5:7,9,26, 26:13–15, 36:18,22
Misery as fate of the wicked (those in Satan's power)	Moses 7:37,41	2 Nephi 2:5,11,13,18,23,27, 9:9,46; Mosiah 3:25; Alma 3:26, 9:11, 26:20, 40:15,17,21, 41:4, 42:1,26; Helaman 3:29, 5:12, 7:16, 12:26; Mormon 8:38
Enoch's "heart swelled wide as eternity" & "bowels yearned" over the grief of wickedness / Christ's "bowels of mercy" and infinite atonement	Moses 7:28–41, particularly 41	Bowels of mercy: Mosiah 15:9; Alma 26: 37, 34:15 Infinite atonement: 2 Nephi 9:7; Alma 34:10,14
Satan's power over the hearts of men (e.g., dominion over men's hearts and raging in their hearts)	Moses 6:15	1 Nephi 12:17, 13: 27,29, 14:7, 22:15,26, 30:18; Mosiah 3:6, Alma 8:9, 10:24,25, 12:11, 27:12; Helaman 6:21, 16:22,23; 3 Nephi 1:22, 2:2–3, 6:15–16, 11:29; 4 Nephi 28,31; Ether 8:15–26, 15:19; Moroni 9:3–4
Shaking, trembling of heavens, earth, Satan, and the wicked / shaking off of Satan's chains, bands, and sin	Moses 1:21, 6:47–49, 7:41, 61	2 Nephi 1:13,23, 9:44–45, 28:19



Concept	Book of Moses	Book of Mormon
Word returning void, in context of the Garden of Eden and the Fall	Moses 4:30	Alma 12:22–23,26, 42:2–5
"esteeming" scripture as a thing of "naught"	Moses 1:40–41	1 Nephi 19:6–9; 2 Nephi 3:2–3
Compound parallels 1: (A) the captivity of Satan, (B) the concept of "eternal life" and (C) the combination of "temporal" and "spiritual," describing God's creation	(A) Moses 4:4, (B) Moses 1:39; and (C) Moses 6:63	1 Nephi 14:7
Compound #2: (A) hardening of hearts and (B) blinding of men	(A) Moses 6:15, 27, (B) Moses 4:4, 6:27	1 Nephi 7:8, 13:27, 17:30; Jarom 3, Mosiah 11:29, Alma 13:4, 48:3; 3 Nephi 2:1–2, 7:16; Ether 4:15, 15:19
Compound #3: (A) Devil as father of lies, (B) shut out from the presence of God, and (C) secret combinations, (D) works of darkness, and (E) misery for the wicked	(A) Moses 4:4, (B) Moses 5:4, 41, 6:49, (C) Moses 5:51, (D) Moses 5:51, 55, and (E) Moses 7:37,41	2 Nephi 9:9
Compound #4: (A) Satan's fall + his angels, (B) plan of salvation / merciful plan of God, (C) temporal vs. spiritual, (D) clothed with glory/purity/robe of righteousness	(A) Moses 4:3–4, 7:26, (B) Moses 6:62, (C) Moses 6:63, (D) Moses 7:3	2 Nephi 9:6–14 (A) vv. 8–9, (B) vv. 6, 13, cf. v. 28, (C) vv. 10–12, (D) v. 14
Compound parallels 5: (A) Satan will "rage in hearts", (B) chains of hell/ destruction, (C) Satan leading captive	(A) Moses 6:15, (B) Moses 7:26,57, (C) Moses 4:4	2 Nephi 28:18–23
Compound #6: (A) workmanship of God's hands and (B) counsel	(A)+(B): Moses 1:4, 7:32–40	(A)+(B): Jacob 4:9–10

# *‘aphar vs. ‘ophel: Lehi’s wordplay?*

- In Isaiah 29:4, speech whispers from the “dust”: from *‘aphar* (עפר) which occurs 15 times in Isaiah, in KJV always translated as “dust” except in Isaiah 2:19 (“earth”).
- Also *‘epher* (אפר) can mean “loose soil crumbling into dust.” In KJV, all 22 occurrences are “ashes,” but it is “dust” twice in the NIV.
- The KJV word “obscurity” in Isaiah 29:18 is tied to לְפֶלַח, which can be transliterated as *‘ophel*:
  - ▣ *’ôphel*, o'fel (from H651, *’âphêl* [אֶפְהֵל]); meaning “dusk:—darkness, obscurity, privily, while *’âphêl* is “from an unused root meaning to set as the sun; dusky—very dark.” *HALOT*, 79.

# Isaiah 52:1-2, a Highly Used Passage

- 1. **Awake, awake;** put on thy strength, O Zion; **put on thy beautiful garments,** O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.
- 2. **Shake** thyself from the **dust; arise, and sit down,** O Jerusalem: **loose thyself from the bands** of thy neck, O **captive** daughter of Zion.
  - Used by Lehi, Nephi, Jacob, Christ, and Moroni
  - The theme of gaining promised covenant blessings in the promised land fits Lehi's "prosper in the land" teachings (2 Nephi 1:20) and the goals of his farewell speech.



# In 2 Nephi 1, Lehi Employs Isaiah 52

- 13 O that ye would **awake, awake ... and shake off the awful chains ...**
- 14 **Awake! and arise from the dust....** [A] few more days and I go all the way of the earth.
- 21 And now that my soul might have joy in you, and that my heart might leave this world with gladness because of you, that I might not be brought down with grief and sorrow to the grave, **arise from the dust**, my sons, and be men, ... that ye may not come down into **captivity**;
- 22 That ye may not be cursed with a sore cursing....
- 23 **Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness. Shake off the *chains* with which ye are bound, and come forth out of *obscurity*, and arise from the dust.**

# Isaiah 52:1-2, for Review

- 1. **Awake, awake;** put on thy strength, O Zion; **put on thy beautiful garments,** O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean.
- 2. **Shake** thyself from the **dust; arise,** *and* sit down, O Jerusalem: **loose thyself from the bands** of thy neck, O **captive** daughter of Zion.

# A Dusty Chiasmus in Lehi's Farewell

- A 13 **Awake, sleep of hell, chains**
- B 13 carried away captive .. gulf of misery and wo
- C 14 awake, **arise from the dust**
- D 14 cold and silent **grave**
- E 15 **my soul** / encircled in arms of his love
- F 16 observe the **statutes** and the judgments / **cut off**
- G 18 visited by sword, famine, led [by] **will** & captivity of the devil
- G 19 favored people of the Lord, his **will** be done
- F 20 **commandments** / **cut off**
- E 21 **my soul** / joy, gladness
- D 21 **grave**
- C 21 **arise from the dust**
- B 22 destruction, destruction
- A 23 **Awake, chains, obscurity**, “and arise from the dust”

See 2 Nephi 1 in Donald R. Parry's *Poetic Parallelisms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, BYU, 2007); free download at <https://tinyurl.com/arisedust7>.



# Usage of Isaiah 55:1-2

- Full quotation:
  - ▣ 2 Nephi 8:24-25 (Jacob)
  - ▣ 3 Nephi 20:36-37 (Christ)
- Direct use / paraphrasing:
  - ▣ 2 Nephi 1:13-14, 21, 23 (Lehi's farewell)
  - ▣ Moroni 10:31 (Moroni's farewell)
- Alluded to:
  - ▣ Jacob 3:11 (shake yourselves ... awake from the slumber of death; and loose yourselves)
  - ▣ Alma 5:7 (awake from sleep, remove bands of death)
  - ▣ Alma 36 (chains and other elements)
  - ▣ Possibly 2 Nephi 28:19 and Alma 13:29–30, others

# Dust and Enthronement

- Walter Brueggemann, “From Dust to Kingship,” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 84/1 (1972): 1–18.
- Brueggemann explains that “the motifs of **covenant-renewal**, **enthronement**, and **resurrection** cannot be kept in isolation from each other.”
- Rising from the dust is related to enthronement and empowerment, with political and theological aspects.



# Brueggemann's Investigation

- 1 Kings 16:2: the Lord tells Baasha “I exalted you out of the dust and made you leader over my people Israel.” But then the antithesis: “Behold I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house,” referring to Baasha losing his status and becoming dust again.
- Tied to the Creation: God formed man out of the dust, Gen. 2:7; we are dust and will return to it (Gen. 3:19).
- After being formed from the dust, Adam and Eve are put in charge of the Garden — given authority and responsibility — an aspect of “rising from the dust.”



## Brueggemann, “From Dust to Kingship,” 2–3.

- “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**.”
- “[T]o 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.”
- “To die and be raised is to be out of covenant and then back in covenant. So also to be ‘from dust’ is to enter into a covenant and to return ‘to dust’ is to have the covenant voided.”

# J. Wijngaards

- J. Wijngaards, “Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos. VI 2),” *Vetus Testamentum* 17, Fasc. 2 (April 1967): 226–239; <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1516837>.
- “Dying and rising” describe the voiding and renewing of covenants.
- Calls to “turn” or “repent” involve changing loyalties or entering into a new covenant.
- New Testament themes of resurrection are built on Israel’s ancient enthronement rituals, and when Christ was “raised up” from the dead “on the third day,” the concept draws upon a variety of related Old Testament passages (e.g., Hosea 6:2’s reference to revival after 3 days of death).

Wijngaards’ paper can be accessed at [tinyurl.com/arisedust10](http://tinyurl.com/arisedust10).

# Lehi's Dust & Creation Motifs (2 Ne. 1)

- Awake, arise, dust, cursing, light and dark, creation (opposite is destruction), agency (vs. captivity).
- V. 13: “awake from a deep sleep” (see Gen. 2:21).
- V. 23: come “out of obscurity” like coming out of the void in Genesis 1, coming out of darkness.
- Cut off from God's presence (v. 20).
- “Cursed with a sore cursing” (v. 22).
- Clothed with skins by God vs. putting on armor of righteousness (v. 23).



# Let's Talk Politics (and Dust)

- David Bokovoy, in light of Walter Brueggemann's work, saw the political implications of the dust theme in Nephi and Jacob's writings
- Lehi's charge to rise from the dust (and keep the covenant) is accepted by Nephi:
  - ▣ 2 Nephi 4:28: "**Awake**, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul."
  - ▣ Nephi also prays that he "may shake at the appearance of sin," as in shaking off chains/bands per Lehi and Isaiah.
- This strengthens the case for Nephi as legitimate successor of Lehi, both as the political and spiritual leader.
- Two chapters later, Jacob, at Nephi's request, quotes Isaiah 52:1-2. In context, Bokovoy says this helps cement Nephi's legitimacy as ruler.
- He who rises from the dust is given authority and power.
- Laman and Lemuel could reign if they would rise from the dust and be righteous men: 2 Nephi 1:28–29. But that honor goes to Nephi.

# Why is Isaiah 49:22-23 Quoted Twice?

- Two occurrences: 1 Nephi 21:22–23 and 2 Nephi 6:6–7:
  - 22 Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.
  - 23 And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face towards the **earth**, and **lick up the dust of thy feet**; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.
- **Proposal:** Used in a large *inclusio* to highlight Lehi's dust-related speech as a key passage in Nephite religion.
- *Inclusio* is an ancient poetical device in which a common phrase or related material brackets a portion of text. Chiasmus can be considered “recursive *inclusio*.”

# From Dust to Dust: Nephi's Dusty Inclusio

## □ **A1. Isaiah on Dust Removal and (Ironic) Enthronement**

Start: 1 Nephi 20:1 (Is. 48:1): Arising from the waters of Judah (baptism: washed).

End: 1 Nephi 21:22–26 (Is. 49:22–26): Kings and queens to lick the dust off the feet of the covenant people.

▣ **B. 1 Nephi 22 and 2 Nephi 1–6, including Lehi's Farewell and Nephi's Psalm.** Themes of dust, deliverance from captivity, and redemption.

## □ **A2. Isaiah on Dust Removal and (Ironic) Enthronement**

Start: 2 Nephi 6:6, quoting Is. 49:22–23 (kings licking dust from the feet)

End: 2 Nephi 8:24–25, quoting Is. 52:1–2 ("Awake, awake . . . Shake thyself from the dust, arise.")

# Explanatory Power

- Why would Nephi include the same Isaiah passage a second time in his concise record?
- Making it part of an inclusio highlights and expands upon its meaning, and signals the importance of related material inside.
- Arising (or being washed) from the dust is introduced as a vital and rich motif.

# Dust: Begins and Ends 2 Nephi

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- 2 Nephi 1, rich in dust themes
- Concluding words in 2 Nephi 33:13: “I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust: Farewell until that great day shall come.”



# The Dust Complex

- Dust: a symbol of death, decay, chaos, and the raw materials of God's Creation
- Rising from the dust = keeping the covenant, resurrection, receiving power and authority, enthronement, salvation
- Dust, like chains of captivity, must be shaken off
- Dust can be washed or licked off

# Related Concepts

- Shaking: shake off dust, chains, bands
- Repenting, cleansing
- Singing, rejoicing (for those who arise)
- Rising (*quwm* in Is. 52): establish, stand, ascend
- Sitting (in authority, on a throne)
- Putting on robes of authority (enthronement)
- Encircling (chains, bands vs. robes/arms of the Lord)
- Resurrection
- Exaltation, enthronement

# Other Illustrations of Dust Themes in Isaiah

- Isaiah 26:19: Thy **dead** men shall **live**, together with my **dead body** shall they **arise**. **Awake and sing**, ye that **dwell in dust**: for thy **dew** is as the dew of herbs, and **the earth shall cast out the dead**.
- Isaiah 61:3: To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for **ashes [dust]**, the **oil of joy [anointing]** for mourning, the **garment of praise** [royal robes] for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.
- Isaiah 29:4: ...thy speech shall be low out of the dust,...as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.
- See Avraham Gileadi, *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (San Diego, Hebraeus Press, 1994, 2012), on chaos/creation.

# Dust Removal



# Dust Removal

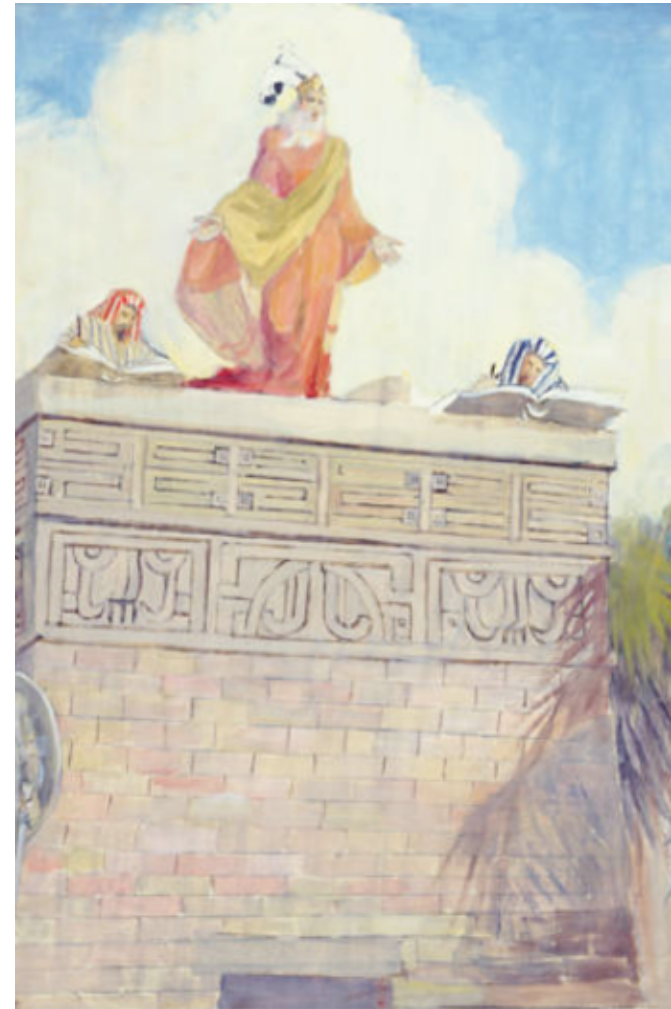
- Washing of feet: like rising from the dust, a washing to remove dust, a symbol of cleansing and receiving authority or honor.
- Licking the dust off the feet in Isaiah 49:23.
- Anointing eyes with clay (John 9:6–7), with clay as symbol of creation, per Irenaeus and Daniel Frayer-Griggs, *J. of Bibl. Lit.* (2013). (arisedust6)
- Related to Enoch, who became a seer by anointing eyes with clay and washing them (Moses 6:35–6).
- The washing off of dust/clay (sin, chaos) relates to divine gifts.
- Is dust removal an aspect of baptism as one rises from the waters of chaos and death?





# Dust and King Benjamin's Speech

- In Mosiah 2:25–26, Mosiah links dust to humility:
  - ▣ Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the *dust* of the earth; yet ye were created of the *dust* of the earth...
  - ▣ And I, even I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves are; for I am also of the *dust* ... and am about to yield up this mortal frame to its mother earth.



# King Benjamin's Speech, cont.

- Following his speech, the people are ready to make a covenant in Mosiah 4:1–2
  - ▣ [H]e cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold **they had fallen to the earth**, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them.
  - ▣ And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even **less than the dust of the earth**. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins....
- Is this a ritualized response to spiritual events in Nephite culture, influenced by dust motifs?

# Falling to the Earth

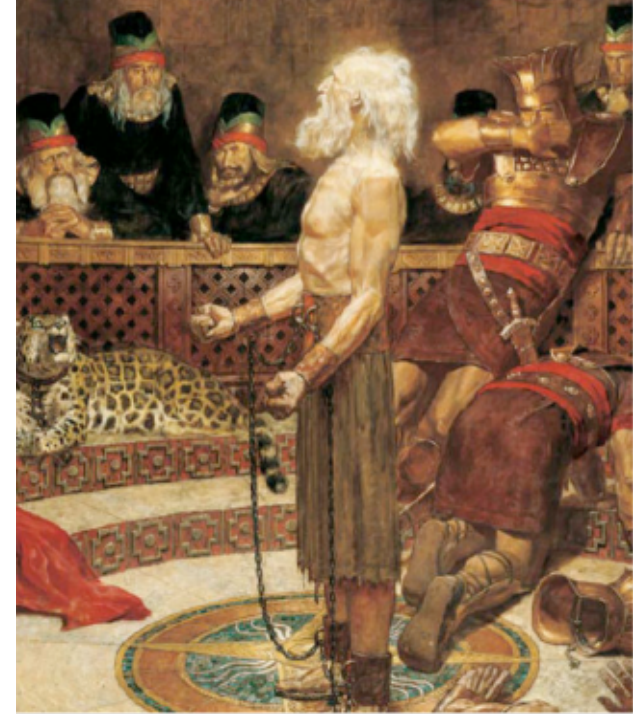
- Possible symbolic meanings:
  - ▣ Physical death
  - ▣ Spiritual death (falling away from God)
  - ▣ Rebellion, sin, breaking the covenant
  - ▣ Losing power, authority, life
  - ▣ Destruction
- Opposites: Rising, standing, resurrection, revival, receiving power, enthronement, covenant making and covenant keeping

# Abinadi's Encounter with Noah's Priests

- Of all the tricky questions they could toss at Abinadi, why do they ask him to explain “how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet” from Isaiah 52:7-10?
  - ▣ 20 And it came to pass that one of them said unto him: What meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers, saying:
  - ▣ 21 **How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;**
  - ▣ 22 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they **sing**; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;
  - ▣ 23 Break forth into **joy**; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath **comforted** his people, he hath **redeemed** Jerusalem;
  - ▣ 24 The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the **salvation** of our God?
- **Proposal:** If Isaiah 52 were a foundational part of Nephite religion, as suggested by Nephi's dusty inclusio, the “feel good” part of Is. 52 might seem like an effective rebuttal to Abinadi's gloom and doom.

# Abinadi's Response

- At first glance, Abinadi seems to give an odd, rambling answer that doesn't address the puzzling question.
- But if Is. 52 was a pivotal passage in Nephite religion, then his answer lays a foundation to overthrow the priests' misapplication.
  - ▣ Understanding the law and its purpose
  - ▣ Reconciliation through the Messiah
  - ▣ Repentance and following God
  - ▣ Only then can we begin rejoicing.
- Those whose feet will become beautiful on Mount Zion heed Isaiah 52:1–2 through shaking off the dust, repenting, arising, receiving the grace of the Messiah and putting on the beautiful garments of the Lord. Then shall those feet be firmly established, with cause to rejoice and sing praises to their Redeemer.





# Dusting off the Chiasmus in Alma 36

- Falling to the earth: a sign of covenant breaking and death. Contrast: arising and regaining life, use of limbs, and entering into the covenant.
- Dust themes in a “sloppy” portion:
  - ▣ 7 earth did tremble beneath our feet ... fell to the earth ... fear of the Lord
  - 8 ...the voice said unto me, Arise. And I arose and stood up
  - 9 ...destroyed ... seek no more to destroy the church of God
  - 10 ... I fell to the earth ... three days and three nights ...
  - 11 ...destroyed...destroy no more ... fear ... destroyed ... fell to the earth and did hear no more
- Falling to the earth mentioned three times.
- Three days (in grave) in Hos. 6:2 vital in Wijngaard’s study.

# Arising, Singing, Life, Rebirth, Joy, a Throne

- 22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his **throne**, surrounded with numberless concourses of *angels*, in the attitude of **singing** and praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.
- 23 But behold, *my limbs did receive their strength again*, and *I stood upon my feet*, and did manifest unto the people that *I had **been born of God***.
- 24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance; that I might bring them to taste of **the exceeding joy of which I did taste**; *that they might also **be born of God***, and be **filled** with the Holy Ghost.
- 25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth give me exceedingly great **joy** in the fruit of my labors;
- 26 For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, many have been **born of God**, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the knowledge which I have is of God.
- Being born of God is mentioned three times. Other contrasts include standing, limbs regaining strength, tasted+seen+spoken (signs of life), singing, viewing a throne, joy, etc.

# Implications for Alma 36

- The “loose sections” in vv. 5–15, 23–26 have much more parallelism than just 4 words identified by Welch.
- Multiple strands employing dust-related themes appear to be interwoven.
- Alma’s contrast between falling to the earth and being born again and freed from the chains of death suggests awareness and deliberate use of dust-related concepts from Nephi, Isaiah, etc.
- There may be much more structure and craftsmanship than we realized in passages often said to be too weak to be real chiasmus.
- Paper: <https://tinyurl.com/arisedust3> (*Interpreter*)

# Christ's Use of Dust Themes (3 Ne. 20)

- Context: Following baptism and receipt of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous scene in ch. 19, Christ continues the covenantal theme as he breaks and blesses bread, gives wine, all miraculously provided, filling them (vv. 3-10).
- But first, he commands them to *arise*. “And they *arose* up and stood” (v 2).
- He speaks of fulfilling ancient covenants with Israel, their gathering and their lands of inheritance (10-15)
- “I will *establish* my people” (21), “this people will I *establish* in this land” (22), “prophet shall ... God *raise up* (23). (All likely using Hebrew *quwm*.)
- “The Father having *raised me up* unto you first,” to turn sinners away from iniquities (renewing covenant, 26)
- “Break forth into joy -- Sing together” (34)
- “Awake, awake again, and put on thy strength” (36)
- “Shake thyself from the dust; arise, sit down” (37)
- “How beautiful ... are the feet ...” (40)
- Restoration, gathering, fulfilling covenant (vv. 41-46)



# Moroni's Third & Final Closing, Mor. 10

- 31 **And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments,** O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the **covenants** of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be **fulfilled**.
- 32 Yea, **come unto Christ,** and be **perfected in him,** and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may **be perfect in Christ....**
- 33 [T]hen are ye **sanctified** in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the **covenant** of the Father unto the **remission of your sins,** that ye become **holy, without spot.**
- 34 And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until **my spirit and body shall again reunite,** and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing [pleading] bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.
- Themes: Covenant keeping and fulfilling, sanctification, gathering, cleansing, resurrection, judgment, and enthronement.

See also Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, Chap. 9, and arisedust14-18.



# Conclusions

- A complex of dust themes in the Book of Mormon are appropriately and meaningfully applied.
- Modern scholarship on this ancient theme gives us tools to better understand rich and subtle meanings.
  - ▣ Messages from Nephi and Lehi, and Nephi's rightful reign
  - ▣ Further relationships to the Book of Moses & brass plates
  - ▣ Alma 36 (and other chiasmic passages with chains)
  - ▣ Abinadi vs. Noah's priests
  - ▣ King Benjamin's speech and Nephite swooning
  - ▣ Covenantal objectives of Christ and Moroni
- Isaiah 52 may have been pivotal in Nephite religion.
- Those themes are used artfully with beautiful parallelism (inclusio, chiasmus), possible wordplays, and appropriate covenant-based implications.
- The Book of Mormon is an ancient voice from the dust.
- Its goal is to help us rise from the dust and follow the Savior.

Seeing but initially misunderstanding evidence of the Resurrection:



An analogy to encountering the Book of Mormon, the voice from the dust

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