

# Breath, Dust, and Divine Calling

## Reclaiming Prophetic Vulnerability in a Miracle starved Church

### Introduction

The longer I walk with God, the more compelled I am to return to the elemental truths of Scripture—dust, breath, spirit, embodiment, and the mystery of divine immanence. My reflections have increasingly centred on the extraordinary claim of Genesis 2:7: “*And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*” This single verse has become, for me, a theological axis around which questions of identity, calling, and the supernatural revolve. It is here that I find the foundation for a renewed understanding of prophetic vulnerability and the recovery of a miracle-centred Church.

In earlier reflections, I wrote that

Man is not the product of random or arbitrary molecules, atoms or cosmic cascade. The physical substance is not the final outcome. It is but one key aspect that forms us, our *Yatsar* in Hebrew meaning, ‘to mould, shape or form.’ (Forum, 1)

I stand by that conviction. The biblical narrative does not present humanity as an accident of cosmic chemistry but as a deliberate act of divine artistry. The dust is real, but it is not sufficient. The breath is real, but it is not abstract. Together they form a creature who is both grounded and transcendent, both fragile and glorious.

This essay is an attempt to articulate how this anthropology shapes my understanding of prophetic leadership, the nature of celestial beings, and the urgent need for a Church that once again embodies the tactile, vulnerable, miracle-working presence of God. My aim is not to make grandiose claims about myself but to speak honestly about the sense of calling that has grown within me—a calling to embody a form of ministry that is radically truthful, completely vulnerable, and totally dependent on the breath of God.

### Dust and Breath: The foundations of human uniqueness

Genesis 2:7 is not merely a poetic flourish; it is a theological declaration of human distinctiveness. John Walton argues that the ancient Near Eastern context helps us see that the forming of humanity from dust is not about material composition but about function and identity within God’s ordered world (Walton 2009, p. 72). Dust signifies mortality, creatureliness, and dependence. Breath signifies divine impartation, vocation, and relational capacity.

The Hebrew term *nephesh* often translated “soul,” does not refer to an immaterial essence but to an embodied, breathing, conscious being (Middleton 2005, p. 27). Humanity becomes a *nephesh* only when God breathes into the dust-formed vessel. This breath

(*nishmat hayyim*) is not merely oxygen; it is the animating gift that makes humanity capable of communion with God, capable of bearing His image, and capable of receiving His Spirit.

Previously I said: *"Paradox exists in God being distinct or transcendent from his creation. Yet his breath placed within our mortal coils, certifies his immanence and indwelling, in ways science struggles to explain"* (Forum 1). This paradox remains central to my theology. The God who is wholly other, chooses to dwell within the fragile frame of dust. The breath is both gift and calling, both life and responsibility.

Walter Brueggemann notes that the breath of God in Genesis 2:7 is echoed in Ezekiel 37, where the Spirit breathes life into the valley of dry bones (Brueggemann 2002, p. 165). Breath is not only the origin of life but the means of renewal. It is this same breath that Jesus imparts to His disciples in John 20:22: *"He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost."* The continuity is striking. Divine breath is the medium of divine empowerment.

This anthropology has profound implications for how we understand prophetic calling. If God's breath is the source of life, then prophetic ministry must be rooted not in technique, charisma, or institutional authority— but in vulnerability to the breath of God.

### **Celestial Beings and the Divine Council: Reconsidering the Sons of God**

My reflections on breath and embodiment naturally led me to consider the nature of celestial beings. Previously I have noted: *"Satan is one of the sons of God... from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it"* (Forum 1). This observation, drawn from Job 1:6–7, raises important questions about the theory of heavenly beings.

Michael Heiser's work on the divine council has been instrumental in clarifying these categories. Heiser argues that the term *"sons of God"* (*bene elohim*) in the Old Testament refers not to angels in the later Christian sense but to divine council members, spiritual beings who participate in God's governance of the cosmos (Heiser 2015: 23). These beings are not human, not embodied, and not recipients of divine breath. They are spiritual intelligences, created by God, who operate within a hierarchical celestial order.

This model helps resolve the tension between Job 1–2, Psalm 82, and Hebrews 1. The "sons of God" in Job are divine council members. The "gods" in Psalm 82 are spiritual rulers who are judged for their injustice. Hebrews 1, however, insists that no angel has ever been addressed as God's begotten Son. The categories are distinct.

Satan, in this framework, is not a fallen angel in the popular sense but a rebellious divine council member, a spiritual prince who has turned against God's purposes. This aligns with Daniel 10, where celestial "princes" oppose the messenger sent to Daniel. These beings are powerful, but they are not recipients of divine breath. They do not become *nephesh*. They do not share humanity's embodied vocation. They do not receive redemption.

This distinction matters because it underscores the uniqueness of humanity. We are dust, but we are breathed upon. We are mortal, but we are redeemable. We are vulnerable, but we are indwelt. No celestial being, fallen or faithful, shares this paradoxical identity.

### **Embodiment, Tactility, and the Supernatural**

One of the most striking features of biblical miracles is their tactile nature. God does not shy away from physicality. He touches, breathes, anoints, lays hands, smears mud, stretches bodies, and raises the dead through embodied acts.

I saw this clearly a year ago, *“Whether muddy paste in the eyes of the blind, or breathing into lungs of the lifeless, I assert that touch and tactility invokes God to enact more sizeable miracles”* (Forum 1). This conviction has only deepened studying the biblical narrative.

#### **Consider:**

- Elisha stretching himself upon the Shunammite’s son (2 Kings 4:34).
- Jesus touching lepers (Mark 1:41).
- The woman touching Jesus’ garment (Mark 5:27–29).
- Paul’s handkerchiefs healing the sick (Acts 19:12).
- The laying on of hands as a normative practice (Hebrews 6:2).

N.T. Wright argues that the incarnation itself is the ultimate affirmation of embodiment: God does not save us from the body but in and through the body (Wright 2003, p. 112). The tactile nature of miracles is not incidental; it is theological. It affirms that God works through the material world He created and called good.

This is why I believe the modern Church has lost something vital. I lament: *“Majority Churches in the UK have become studiously heavy or worship centred and major miracle counts are down... Intellectual posturing is just one aspect of the malaise that besets the Church”* (Forum 1). I do not say this to condemn but to diagnose. We have become cerebral where Scripture is embodied. We have become spectators where Scripture calls us to participation. We have become safe where Scripture calls us to vulnerability.

### **A New Vision for a Miracle-Centred Church**

If the Church is to rediscover its supernatural vitality, it must first recover a vision of itself that is rooted in the biblical anthropology of dust and breath. The early Church did not separate theology from experience, nor doctrine from demonstration. It understood that the God who breathed life into Adam continues to breathe life into His people, empowering them to act as agents of His kingdom. This is not a peripheral theme but a central one. The Spirit is not an optional enhancement to Christian life; He is the animating breath without which the Church becomes a body without vitality, a form without power.

When I look at the contemporary Church, particularly in the UK, I see a community that has become increasingly cautious, increasingly cerebral, and increasingly detached from the tactile, embodied ministry that characterised both Jesus and the apostles. Worship has become polished, teaching has become sophisticated, and administration has become efficient, yet the supernatural dimension—the dimension that once made the Church a sign of God’s inbreaking kingdom—has diminished. I do not say this to condemn but to lament. The Church has not lost its theology of the Spirit, but it has lost its posture toward the Spirit. It has lost the vulnerability that invites divine interruption.

A miracle-centred Church is not one obsessed with spectacle or driven by emotionalism. Rather, it is a Church that understands that miracles are the natural outworking of God’s breath in human vessels. It is a Church that recognises that divine power is made perfect in human weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). It is a Church that embraces the paradox of being both dust and Spirit-filled, both fragile and empowered. Such a Church does not fear vulnerability; it welcomes it as the very condition in which God delights to work.

To move toward such a vision, we must first acknowledge that the biblical narrative consistently presents God as one who works through embodied, tactile means. Jesus did not heal from a distance when He could heal through touch. He touched lepers, allowing Himself to be made ritually unclean in order to make them whole (Mark 1:41). He placed His fingers in the ears of the deaf man and touched his tongue (Mark 7:33). He spat on the ground, made clay, and anointed the eyes of the blind (John 9:6). These are not incidental details; they are theological statements. They reveal a God who is not afraid of human frailty, who does not recoil from physicality, and who chooses to work through the very dust from which we were formed.

The apostles continued this tactile ministry. Peter took the lame man by the right hand and lifted him up (Acts 3:7). Again I say, Paul laid hands on the sick, and even handkerchiefs that had touched his body carried healing virtue (Acts 19:12). The laying on of hands became a foundational practice of the early Church (Hebrews 6:2). These embodied acts were not magical gestures but expressions of a theology that understood the human body as a vessel of divine breath, a conduit of God’s power.

In contrast, much of contemporary ministry has become disembodied. We speak words from a distance, we pray general prayers, and we avoid the kind of intimate, vulnerable, tactile ministry that characterised the biblical narrative. We have become afraid of appearing foolish, afraid of failure, afraid of stepping beyond the boundaries of what feels safe and respectable. Yet the God who breathed into Adam’s nostrils has not changed. His breath still animates, still empowers and calls us into embodied participation in His work.

A miracle-centred Church must therefore be a Church that embraces vulnerability. Vulnerability is not weakness; it is openness. It is the willingness to be seen, to be touched, to be used. It is the willingness to risk failure in order to make space for God’s power. I believe God is calling us, *“to make ourselves vulnerable, to differentiate ourselves from previous charismatic Christian leaders who have failed to properly attract God’s attention and anointing”* (Forum 1). This conviction has only deepened. The failures of past leaders were not rooted in their pursuit of the supernatural but in their lack of vulnerability, their inability to remain grounded in dust even as they carried divine breath. They forgot that power is given, not possessed; that authority is bestowed, not claimed.

Prophetic leadership in this new vision is therefore not about dominance or spectacle but about transparency, humility, and truthfulness. It is about leaders who are willing to admit their limitations, who are willing to be shaped by God, who are willing to be moulded like clay in the hands of the potter. It is about leaders who understand that their authority comes not from their charisma but from their surrender. Walter Brueggemann's description of prophetic ministry as the work of "dismantling and energising" (Brueggemann 2001, p. 3) captures this well. The prophet dismantles illusions—not only the illusions of the people but the illusions within themselves—and then energises the community with a vision of God's alternative future.

In this sense, prophetic vulnerability is not merely a personal disposition but a theological necessity. It is the posture that allows the breath of God to flow freely. It is the posture that acknowledges that we are dust, and that any power we carry is borrowed, not owned. It is the posture that invites God to act.

### **Miracles and Spiritual Warfare**

A miracle-centred Church must also recover a robust understanding of spiritual conflict. The divine-council worldview, as articulated by scholars such as Michael Heiser, reminds us that the cosmos is populated by spiritual beings who participate in God's governance of creation (Heiser 2015, p. 23). Some of these beings have rebelled, becoming adversaries to God's purposes. Satan, in this framework, is not a fallen angel in the simplistic sense but a rebellious divine council member, a spiritual prince who opposes God's rule. This worldview does not diminish human responsibility but heightens it. Humanity, uniquely formed from dust and breathed upon by God, occupies a role that no celestial being can claim. We are both physical and spiritual, both earthly and heavenly. We stand at the intersection of realms.

This intersectional identity means that the Church's ministry is inherently supernatural. We are not merely proclaiming ideas; we are participating in a cosmic drama. We are not merely offering comfort; we are confronting powers. We are not merely performing rituals; we are enacting the reign of God. A miracle-centred Church understands this. It recognises that healing, deliverance, prophecy, and signs are not optional extras but essential expressions of the kingdom.

Yet such ministry cannot be sustained by technique or formula. It requires intimacy with God, sensitivity to His breath, and a willingness to be shaped by His hand. It requires leaders who are willing to be vulnerable, who are willing to step into the unknown, who are willing to risk failure for the sake of obedience. It requires a community that values presence over performance, encounter over entertainment, transformation over information.

This vision is not nostalgic. I am not calling for a return to some imagined golden age of the Church. Rather, I am calling for a recovery of the biblical imagination—a way of seeing the world that recognises the interplay of dust and breath, the reality of spiritual beings, the centrality of embodiment, and the necessity of vulnerability. This imagination is not opposed to scholarship; it is enriched by it. Scholars such as John Walton, J. Richard

Middleton, and N.T. Wright have helped us see that the biblical worldview is far more integrated, far more embodied, and far more supernatural than many modern Christians realise (Walton 2009; Middleton 2005; Wright 2003).

## **Come home**

My own sense of calling emerges from this integrated vision. I do not claim to be a prophet in the classical sense, nor do I claim to possess extraordinary gifts. But I cannot ignore the stirring within me, the sense that God is calling me to embody a form of ministry that is radically truthful, radically vulnerable, and radically dependent on His breath. I believe He is calling me to help cultivate a Church that is not afraid of the supernatural, not afraid of touch, not afraid of failure, not afraid of being seen. A Church that is willing to be dust in the hands of the potter and breath in the lungs of the Spirit.

This calling is not about elevating myself but about responding to God. It is about offering my life as clay, trusting that He will shape it according to His purposes. It is about embracing vulnerability as the pathway to power. It is about recognising that the miracles we long for are not withheld by God but hindered by our own reluctance to be vulnerable, to be embodied, to be present.

A miracle-centred Church is not a Church obsessed with signs, but a Church obsessed with God. It is a Church that seeks His breath, welcomes His presence, and responds to His leading. It is a Church that understands that miracles are not ends in themselves but signs of the kingdom, foretastes of the new creation, manifestations of God's love. It is a Church that recognises that the greatest miracle is not the healing of the body but the transformation of the heart, the renewal of the mind, the restoration of relationship with God.

As I look to the future, I am convinced that God is calling His people to rediscover this vision. The world is hungry for authenticity, for power, for hope. The Church cannot meet this hunger with professionalism alone. It must offer presence. It must offer vulnerability. It must offer the breath of God.

This is the vision that animates me. This is the calling that compels me. I do not know where it will lead, but I know that I must follow. For I am dust, and yet I am breathed upon. And that breath is life.

**Jason Strange, March 6<sup>th</sup> 2026**

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