



9



God fills the house

Scriptus Papers



Biblical perspectives on various topics

With smoke, scent, & sound

I'm not a hoarder, I'm just running out of places to put things.

There is no such thing as too much junk. There is, however, such a thing as not enough room.

We are not cisterns made for hoarding, we are channels made for sharing (Billy Graham)

Introduction

Scriptus means 'having been written', and this *Scriptus Paper* concerns the houses that God filled. What's your house like? Is it full? Full of anything and everything? Full of stuff? Is it like the one shown here? People whose houses are full of stuff have a connection to the objects, which is why they want to keep them.

Ecclesiastes 5:13 tells us wealth hoarded harms the owner. Isaiah reminds us that those who don't hoard their wealth, their profits will go toward abundant food and fine clothes (23:18). It's the same idea in Proverbs 11:26: "*People curse the one who hoards grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.*" James 5:3 asserts that if you hoard wealth in the last days your gold or silver will be corroded and eat your flesh.



The Bible says that it's ok to have a clean-out and throw things away? Ecclesiastes 3 speaks about there being a time for everything including "*a time to keep, and a time to cast away.*" We can get rid of what we no longer use - either discard or recycle.

However, there should be no wanton waste. For example, Jews were forbidden cut down fruit trees in the extreme case of a war of conquest, when destruction is the norm (Deuteronomy 20:19–20). How much the more so should this apply in normal life? That is, needless destruction of anything that may be of use to people whether it be energy, clothing, water, money, and more is perhaps what the text is instructing ([Neril](#)). In all of these we are not to forget God who supplies these things, and requires that we take no more than we need (See Deuteronomy 8:11-20. Ex 16:16ff).

So, it leads me to ask 'what is the most important connection to me, and you?' We might be better able to answer that question by making the comparison with three houses filled, not with our things, but with God's. This is the subject of *Scriptus Paper No. 4*.

1. God fills with smoke

Father is the focus

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke (Isaiah 6:1-4).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)



Note: Headings in
this menu are
hyperlinks. Click on
them to go to the
relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

3/12



Earthly king dead

The text is set in the year of Uzziah's death, when Israel was given up to hardness of heart, and its kingdom and country to devastation and annihilation by the imperial power of the world, Assyria. The national glory of Israel died out with king Uzziah, and has never revived.

Uzziah was one of the better and more achieving kings of Judah reigning for 52 years, and “did what was right in the eyes of Yahweh” (2 Chronicles 26:3-4). The end of his reign finished an unparalleled era of prosperity in Judah's history, in parallel with its utmost corruption that Isaiah described (Isaiah 1-5), and left the people with no respect for God and no knowledge of what his holiness demanded of them ([Keil & Delitzsch](#)). The good old days had come to an end.

Sadly, when Uzziah was strong, his heart was lifted up, so that he did corruptly, and tried to usurp priestly prerogatives in the temple. So, God afflicted him with leprosy to his death, and he lived in a separate house (hospital), for he was excluded from the house of the Lord, and His son Jotham was in charge of the palace of the king, governing the people of the land (2 Chronicles 26:20).

In brief, Uzziah lost his throne, his palace and association with the Lord's temple. Against that backdrop of an empty throne, Isaiah sees the Lord on the throne as King, His robes filling the palace, His priestly work filling the house, and His glory filling the earth. God empties some places to fill them. God puts out our little light that we may see Him and His light the better, clearer, nearer, and dearer. Uzziah has to die, in order that we may see that it is God who lives ([Ellicott](#)). No matter how bad things look on earth, things look majestically great in heaven.

Heavenly king alive

The kings of Assyria during this time of great conquest had a little ritual. Every time an Assyrian king would conquer a nation, he seized the train of the robe of the king of the conquered nation and sewed it to the train of his robe. It was his war booty, the tokens of his victory. When you consider all the nations that Assyria had conquered by the time of Isaiah, the king of Assyria had quite a lengthy train hooked up to his robe. The word that is used for a train is *shul*, which means the lower hem of a garment and the last leaf to sprout. What Isaiah saw in his vision was God dressed as a king with a train attached to his robe that filled the temple. The word fill is *mala'* which is more correctly understood as a fulfillment, a completion or the finality, the end. In the end every king of every nation that ever existed will be part of God's train showing that He has and will conquer them all ([Chaim Bentorah](#)). With the imperial power of the world, Assyria, soon to conquer Judah, an encouraging fact is here illustrated, that the Lord will be victorious over the king of Assyria.

The King's palace

‘Temple’ in 6:1 is *heykal*, was not a Temple but a large public building, such as a palace, a regal edifice, and kings of all nationalities had them. Another encouraging picture; Uzziah had to vacate his palace but the Lord still occupies His.

The King's temple

The four verses of text on the previous page are bracketed by the Lord as King on His throne (6:1), and by the Lord as Priest in His temple (6:4). It is in that context, that the house was “**filled with smoke,**” the immediate consequence of the seraphs' song of praise. Indeed, God appearing to Abraham as a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch, suggest His leadership of the Israelites to Canaan after the exodus (Exodus 13:21–22), while in Isaiah's case the smoke and violent shaking are reminders of the Lord's descent to Mount Sinai to communicate with Moses (Exodus 19:18), and the canopy of defence that Isaiah prophesied about for days to come (Isaiah 4:5).

Note: Headings in
this menu are
hyperlinks. Click on
them to go to the
relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

4/12



The King's temple continued

The third 'filling' that Isaiah notices is that *the whole earth is full of his glory*. In Hebrew, 'glory' (*Kavod*) means 'lot of something' and hence 'heavy' or weighty in the physical sense as well as "gravity", "importance", of value, of great appreciation in the spiritual sense, denoting "honour" and "respect." When the King-Priest has His rightful place, as the Psalmist put it: *'Your loyal followers will praise you, they will proclaim the (Kavod) of your kingdom... so that mankind might acknowledge...the (Kavod) of your kingdom'* (Psalm 145:10-12). Interestingly, *Kavod* has a trigram root of *kaph* (an open hand, allow), *bet* (house), and *dalet* (door, opening). The Lord's hand is open to mankind, to come through the door into His house. On His terms, of course - bow to Him as King, and as the sin-cleansing priest.

The seraphim

The smoke was the immediate consequence of the seraphs' song of praise, and this is the only passage in the Scriptures in which the seraphim are mentioned. They stand at the head of the angels, and this can be supported by comparing Ezekiel's cherubim, which carried the chariot of the divine throne; whereas the seraphim surround the seat on which the Lord was enthroned ([Keil & Delitzsch](#)).

Upon Isaiah's confession of sin, a "live coal" (*rizpah*) or rather a "hot stone," which were kept in all ancient Oriental households as a means of applying heat to bake cakes (1 Kings 19:6), or to roast flesh, where the stone was first heated in the fire, and the wet dough or the flesh spread out upon it, and as they grew cold were exchanged for hot ones fresh from the fire. To boil milk, the hot stone was plunged into it when contained in the leathern skin that served alike as cauldron and as pitcher. A seraph takes the hot stone from the altar and lays it on the prophet's lips, the seat of his sin, and announces to him the forgiveness of his guilt ([Keil & Delitzsch](#)). The seraph, therefore, did here what his name denotes: he burned up by means of the divine fire which he had taken from the heavenly altar. As the **smoke which filled the house** came from the altar, and arose in consequence of the adoration offered to the Lord by the seraphim, the fire must necessarily have been divine because of its expiatory power, was an effect of the love of God reciprocating the offerings of the seraphim. A fiery look from God, and that a fiery look of pure love as the seraphim were sinless, had kindled the sacrifice.

Comparatively, the seraphim were the vehicles of the fire of divine love, just as the cherubim in Ezekiel are vehicles of the fire of divine wrath. For just as, in the case before us, a seraph takes the fire of love from the altar; so there, in Ezekiel 10:6-7, a cherub takes the fire of wrath from the throne-chariot. Consequently the cherubim appear as the medium of the wrath which destroys sinners, and the seraphim as the vehicles and media of the love which destroys sin.

But how mournful does the divine commission sound, the opposite of that seraphic mission. The seraph had absolved Isaiah by the burning coal, that he as prophet might not absolve. There is a self-hardening in evil, which renders a man thoroughly incorrigible, and which, regarded as the fruit of his moral behaviour, is no less a judicial punishment inflicted by God, than self-induced guilt on the part of man. To this wrath Israel had delivered itself up through its continued obstinacy in sinning, and consequently the Lord was to shut the door of repentance. Nevertheless, Isaiah's message of repentance allowed for the salvation of individuals ([Keil & Delitzsch](#)). 'For how long' enquired Isaiah? *Until cities are in ruins... the land has become a wasteland...the people are moved far away; And even if just a tenth survive, it will be burned again; like the terebinth or an oak; once it is cut down, the stump remains. The holy seed remains in the stump.*

That is, these trees spring up again from the root having been completely felled. The root-stump was the remnant that had survived the judgment, which becomes a seed, out of which a new Israel would spring up. The passage contains an outline of the history of Israel to the end of time. Israel as a nation was indestructible, by virtue of the promise of God; but the mass of the people were doomed to destruction through the judicial sentence of God, and only a remnant, which would be converted, would perpetuate the nationality of Israel, and inherit the glorious future and will fill the earth with its fruits (Isaiah 27:6), or, become "the riches of the Gentiles" (Romans 11:12).

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

5/12

2. Mary fills with scent

Jesus is the focus

*Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. **The house was filled with the fragrance of the scent** (John 12:1-3).*

Scent is (*osme*), meaning to exude a scent, and in this case it filled the house. The image is a net crammed full of fish, or a hollow levelled up. Notably, says [Kurek-Chomycz](#), the Fourth Gospel is a particularly "sensual" Gospel, and John 12:3 is the only place in the New Testament where the substantive *osme* occurs outside of the Pauline corpus. Interestingly, John highlights the five main human senses in his gospel, as if to show that the One made flesh was a real human being. (See [Lee](#) for more detail). Notice the emphasis on taste in the water made wine (2:9), the prohibition to touch Him (20:17), His hearing, as He hear, He judges (5:30), His sight for he saw Nathaniel under the fig tree (1:50), and the sense of smell, with the scent of the perfume (12:3).

But, from what was the perfume made? The usual culprit is 'nard' or *Nardostachys jatamansi* sourced in India illustrated at right. The Perfume Chronicles asserts that the perfume was from lavender, and in fact nard and lavender in the Bible are one and the same ([Alexandre](#)). It's also illustrated at right. However, David Taliesin from Sabbats and Sabbats.com says that according to his research, all of the scientific and biological resources that he checked agree that nard and lavender are two different herbs. The confusion probably comes from the Greek's calling lavender "nardus." We are not going to solve this argument here so let's just take a look at the characteristics of both.

Nard

What does spikenard oil smell like? The scent is sometimes described as woody, spicy, and musty. Its aroma is earthy and suggestive of the roots it is distilled from ([doTERRA](#)), and has historically been considered one of the most precious of incense ingredients ([Scents of Earth](#)). It is calming to the nerves and strengthening to the mind, an anti-inflammatory, tonic, bactericide and fungicide properties. Totally non-toxic and non-irritant, it is difficult to find and its uses are extremely limited ([Taliesin](#)).

Lavender

What Mary so lavishly anointed the Lord with was 'pure' (*pistikos*), the best, of great quality. As myrrh is a symbol for death, it would have been appropriate for Mary to anoint Jesus' feet with it as a sign of his upcoming death and burial, but she chose lavender ([Alexandre](#)).

Lavender is a flowering plant known for its beauty, its sweet floral fragrance, and its multiple uses. It derives its name from the Latin 'lavare' meaning 'to wash'. The Israelites and Romans alike used Lavender to scent their baths, beds, clothes, and even hair. It is an antidepressant; antiseptic; anti-inflammatory; antiviral; bactericidal; decongestant; diuretic; deodorant; tonic – strengthens and restores vitality to various body systems; restful, mood uplifting ([Rivka Sari](#)).

This noble herb has been used for over 2,500 years, starting with the ancient Egyptians who used it as a part of the mummification process and also as a perfume. It's use was also widespread among the Arabs, Romans and Greeks. Modern Wiccans believe its magical properties include sleep, long life, peace, wishes, protection, love, purification, visions and clarity of thought. Christians of earlier times regarded lavender as a safeguard against evil, and hung a cross of lavender over their door for protection ([Taliesin](#)).

As Mary poured the best on the Best, it is precisely the oil of the best ear of wheat which she poured upon He who compared himself to a kernel of wheat (12:24). This gesture is a clear reference to the words of Jesus saying on the eve of his death: 'Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds' ([Alexandre](#)).



Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

6/12



Foot washing

This occasion was a celebratory dinner, the chief meal of the day, for Jesus. It was in His honour for what He did for the family in raising Lazarus from the dead. But, John uses 50% more words in describing Mary's anointing than he does for the dinner, which was the main act. However, the anointing clearly becomes more important, and is the central item of the story.

The first biblical reference to feet washing is here:

*The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre while he was sitting at the entrance to his tent during the hottest time of the day. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing across from him. When he saw them he ran from the entrance of the tent to meet them and bowed low to the ground. He said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by and leave your servant. Let a little water be brought so that you may all **wash your feet and rest** under the tree. And let me get a bit of food so that you may **strengthen your hearts** since you have passed by your servant's home. After that you may be on your way." "All right," they replied, "you may do as you say" (Genesis 18:1-5).*

Like the nard, which came from the highest spot on earth to the lowest, the Lord has come from heaven, and Abraham's provision of water for foot washing is his way of honouring the Lord from heaven. It, along with the lavish dinner to 'strengthen their hearts, was his expression of hospitality and welcome. Abraham takes the place of a of slave or servant, recognising the Lord as a social superior.

Similarly, Mary could see Jesus was from Heaven, so she washed His feet. Further, in using spikenard, she provides a link to the only other place in Scripture where spikenard is used - Song of Songs 1:12: Solomon's Most Excellent Love Song. *'While the king was at his banqueting table, my nard gave forth its fragrance.'* Likewise Mary, was treating Jesus as her Beloved and her Betrothed. She could see who her groom-to-be was, and focused her mind and actions on Him alone. Smart to spend a year's wages on the spikenard but gain an eternity of protection, provision and love with Her Groom-King ([Jerusalem of gold](#)).

The comment of Theodore of Mopsuestia might not be far wrong: "For it was as if the woman planned this so as to attach the fragrance of our Lord's flesh to her body. For she took care that she should always be with him: she did this in her love so that if she should come to be separated from him, by this she could suppose he was with her still" ([Coakley](#)).

Anointing of the feet was not an everyday occurrence in Jesus' day in Israel. Quite the contrary. But it could be a natural and spontaneous act of extravagance in any society that set store by the use of oils and perfumes. Mary's reported act may be strictly unparalleled, it was not unthinkable, but it was extraordinary. So, Mary's act was not one of hospitality at all but instead was intended as some sort of royal or messianic consecration, an act that was an extravagant gesture of love ([Coakley](#)).

His feet on Olivet

Finally, one more thing about the Lord's feet. Jesus at the home of Lazarus in Bethany, is on the Mount of Olives reclining at dinner when Mary anoints His feet. At His ascension, these same scent-anointed feet left Olivet for heaven, and when He comes again these same scent-anointed feet will stand on Olivet with heaving, trembling effect:

*On that day **His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives...**and the Mount of Olives will be split in half from east to west...Then you will escape...Then the Lord my God will come (Zechariah 14:4-5).*

*The earth **quaked...**at the presence of God, the God of Israel (Psalm 68:8).*

*The mountains **quake** before him, and the hills melt; the earth **heaves** before him, the world and all who live in it (Nahum 1:5).*

You can read the full account in Zechariah 14. The Lord will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to wage war, and the city will be taken. Half goes into exile, the remainder survives.

The Lord will fight against those nations that He has drawn to Jerusalem like a magnet, and strike them with a plague. As His sacred, scented feet stand on the Mount of Olives, with all His holy ones with Him, it will split in half from east to west, leaving a great valley as an escape route for His people. Then the Lord will be king over all the earth.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

7/12



3. Spirit fills with sound

Spirit is the focus

*When the day of Pentecost was altogether completed, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a **sound** like the rush of a violent wind, and it **filled the entire house where they were sitting.***

*Divided **tongues**, as of fire, appeared dividing into smaller flames, and a **tongue** rested on each of them.*

*They were all **filled** with **the Holy Spirit** and began to speak in other **tongues** as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-2).*

In the smoke-filled heavenly house of Isaiah 6, God is the focus, and in the scent-filled house of Lazarus at Bethany, Jesus is the focus, and in the sound-filled Jerusalem house of Acts 2, the Holy Spirit is the focus as the text above reveals.

The Pentecost event described in Acts 2:1 came at the 'complete fulfilling' of the whole seven weeks. That is, the fiftieth day after Passover was in the course of being completed. Pentecost is the Greek name of the feast that is called in the Hebrew Bible the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22, Deuteronomy 16:10), or of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) or of First Fruits (Numbers 28:26). Perhaps the 'complete fulfilling' in Luke's mind also includes the idea that the Acts 2:1 event fills up completely all that the Hebrew festivals represented.

The disciples were like-minded as they gathered in the 'house' (*oikos*). Instead of some building, *oikos* rather describes a centralised realm of economic activity, and can cover a family (Mark 7:30, John 7:53) or enterprise (Mark 5:38, Luke 11:17, Acts 10:2) or church (Romans 16:5, Colossians 4:15), or village (Mark 2:1), or tribe (Hebrews 8:8), or lineage (Luke 2:4), or a whole people (Matthew 10:6, Acts 2:36), or country (Acts 7:10). 'Oikos' really means all of those things, and the domestic abode is a mere manifestation of a much broader concept ([Abarim Publications](#)).

Other tongues

*They were all **filled** with **the Holy Spirit** and began to speak (converse) in other **tongues** as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:1-2).*

Tongues (see [Abarim Publications](#)). The noun tongue (*glossa*) means tongue, and originates in the Proto-Indo-European root "gloḡh", meaning thorn, pointy end or projected thing. This connection probably lies in the wounding effect a volley of words may have. Words can penetrate a person, make the person bleed in a mental way and even cause a person to succumb. The Hebrew word for mouth is (*peh*), which was also used to describe the edge of a sword (Proverbs 5:4). Unsurprisingly, then, the White Horseman of John's vision has, instead of a tongue, a sword sticking out of his mouth, with which He rules the nations (Revelation 19:15). Additionally, the Hebrew word for Law is Torah, which comes from the verb (*yara*), which describes the shooting of many arrows, and Paul promised that the "shield of conviction" would extinguish the flaming darts of the slanderer (Ephesians 6:16).

A tongue is like a sword because nominal reasoning, the art of giving words or names to things, allows a mind to distinguish between items that would otherwise blend together. This is why it is important that Adam's most defining deed was in having distinguished animals, he named them (Genesis 2:19-20), and to know that the Hebrew word for 'to distinguish' is *bin*, which is also the verb for to understand, because all understanding starts with being able to tell differences. In the context of Acts 2, then, 'tongues means distinguishable languages or dialects.

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

8/12



Other. 'Other' here is *heteros*, which means other or another, but in the sense of "one of another kind" or "one of another personality". One of the same kind would be described by the adjective *allos*, and a same one, or one with whom one is joint, is described by *homos*. English makes no or little distinction between *heteros* and *allos* and translates both with "other", and although there is some overlap, in Greek these differences can be profound.

For example, rather mysteriously, after His resurrection Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene in one form and to the travellers to Emmaus in another sort of form (Mark 16:12). So, 'other tongues' were different languages or dialects in which the disciples conversed.

*Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this **sound** (phone) the crowd **gathered** and was **bewildered**, because each one heard them speaking in their own **native dialect (dialektos)**. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own **native dialect (dialektos)**? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages (glossa) we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were **amazed** and **perplexed**, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:5-13).*

The core of *oikos* is the "housefather", and the members of it are called "sons", or collectively the "mother". The defining characteristic that distinguishes a "house" from a hobby club is that the members of house share all resources. The housefather governs the house, and the house trades and interacts with other houses, but once energy or substance enters the house, it's allocated and not traded ([Abarim Publications](#)). This idea of sharing suits the distribution of spiritual resources that the Spirit is about to make, so house perhaps fits the context better than the word temple here, although I would not rule that possibility out.

Suddenly, a **sound** like the roaring of a mighty windstorm (NLT), or a violent wind blowing (Net Bible) **filled the house** where the disciples were. It wasn't wind, but the sound of it, so Luke is not describing a natural but a supernatural phenomenon.

Sound in the sense of physically vibrating air is mostly expressed by the noun *phone*. However, the word that Luke chose here is *echos*, which means to relay by sound (hence our English word echo), or any kind of verbal teaching or information spread by word of mouth.

A good example of *echos* is found in the debate between the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers and Paul about his preaching of Jesus and the resurrection in Athens. They asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? It **sounds (echos)** rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means" (Acts 17:18-20).

So we can see here that *echos* is not about physically vibrating air but about Paul's verbal teaching. Accordingly, the **sound (echos)** that **filled the house** was a supernatural visitation of the Holy Spirit, and a representation that just as He **filled the house** He would fill the disciples to enable them to be **echos**, vehicles of the message of Jesus and the resurrection. Moreover, it is the sound of wind, for it was used in the Hebrew Bible as a symbol of God moving, as in *The Lord glided on the wings of the wind* (Psalm 18:10, 104:3). Wind (*pnoue*), is also the parent of *pneuma*, commonly translated with "spirit", "wind", or "air in motion", "breath", or "violent winds".

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)



Tongues of fire

Fire like wind was symbolic of the divine Presence, as when the Lord appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a bush (Exodus 3:2), or the likeness of burning coals of fire in the middle of the living creatures (Ezekiel 1:13), or the day of the Lord's coming, when He will be like a refiner's fire (Malachi 3:2-3). Further, one mighty flame as of fire, divided into tongues of smaller flames, though originally one, the tongues rested on each of the disciples. This was not a demonstration of crowd-pleasing pyrotechnics but rather of a diversification of intellectual leaning: "for the Holy Spirit will teach you what to say" (Luke 12:12, 21:15).

What were the 'other dialects'? Normally, Jerusalem was a city of 100-200,000 people. Three times a year on the pilgrim festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, Jerusalem's population swelled to 1 million, although the exact number depends on the source of population estimates ([Jewish Virtual Library](#)). The places from which the visitors came are enumerated in the text on the previous page and on the map here. The important question to be answered is: *In what dialects did these visitors converse with one another?*



The languages spoken in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus were Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew or Latin (Luke 23:38, John 19:20). Aramaic is a Semitic language originating in the middle Euphrates. In 800-600 BC it spread from there to Syria and Mesopotamia. But the Lord, along with His disciples probably were multilingual and spoke Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as well. On the other hand, Judaism of the Diaspora had come to differ in character from that of the people of the native land, and the most striking difference was that they had forgotten the language of Judaism (Hebrew). Diaspora Judean groups mostly, if not all, spoke either Aramaic or Greek as their native language. If they were from the west of Jerusalem they would speak Greek or Roman, and if from the east, we would expect them to speak Aramaic.

However, Hebrew remained the sacred language of scholars for religious usage. This change of language, both at home and in the Diaspora, was not without far-reaching effects upon public worship. The ancient custom of reading the Hebrew scriptures in the temple or synagogue necessitated a translation into the Aramaic which the people understood ([Hans Lietzmann](#)).

So, the table below might be the clearest way to summarise the linguistic picture.

Jewish identities	Languages spoken
Temple and religious leaders	Hebrew
Domestic Jews	Mainly Greek, and Aramaic; some Latin
Diaspora Jews from eastern empire	Mainly Aramaic
Diaspora Jews from western empire	Mainly Greek and Latin

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

10/12



*Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this **sound** (phone) the crowd **gathered** and was **bewildered**, because each one heard them speaking in their own **native dialect (dialektos)**. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own **native dialect (dialektos)**? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages (glossa) we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were **amazed** and **perplexed**, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:5-13).*

The text suggests that the speakers of the “other tongues” were speaking the native languages of the crowd, which means that the “other tongues” must have included Aramaic and Greek the native languages of Judea. Hebrew, the “Holy Tongue”, the religious language, the literary language of Jews, was retained by the Judean people for worship.

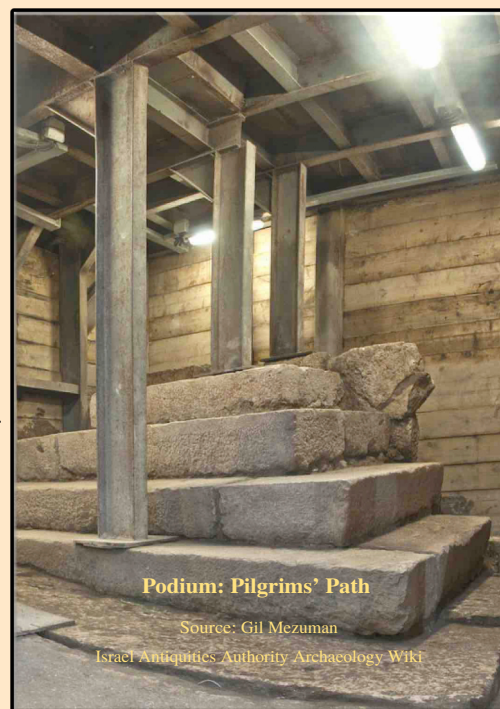
Hebrew as the “Holy Tongue,” was the language that the Diaspora Judeans didn’t understand, but both domestic and Diaspora Judeans expected to hear it in the Temple activities during the feast of Pentecost. The crowd (the holy people of God 2:5) had gathered in the holy land, in Jerusalem (the holy city), at the Temple (the holiest place on earth), hearing trained priests (the holy men) to be conducting the worship in Hebrew on a holy day (see [Zerhusen](#)).

Word got around, however, that some Galileans, who spoke Aramaic were conversing privately with the Diaspora about God’s deeds of power. That is, the disciples of Jesus began to converse in “other tongues”, meaning “other than Hebrew” (the “Holy Tongue”), with a boldness and authority given by the Holy Spirit.

So, Acts 2:4 could be translated: “They began to speak in languages other than Hebrew, as the Spirit kept giving bold, authoritative, inspired speech to them.” The notion that they spoke languages foreign to them but known to the Diaspora is not supported by the text and is alien to historical facts.

The grapevine spread this news and it drew a crowd to the Pilgrim’s Path leading from the Pool of Siloam to the temple to see what was going on. What they heard was new to them, while some put it down to too much alcohol. At this point, Peter, the first of the apostles took to the podium, likely the one pictured here and addressed the crowd publicly in defence.

Peter. Peter was unknown to the crowd, and brushed off as a mere ‘Galilean’ with no credibility, unlike the Hebrew-speaking rabbis who spoke at the temple. He gained gravitas, however, by quoting the Hebrew prophet Joel, and King David.



Podium: Pilgrims' Path

Source: Gil Mezman
Israel Antiquities Authority Archaeology Wiki

Note: Headings in this menu are hyperlinks. Click on them to go to the relevant page

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

11/12



Peter. Standing alongside him with the other apostles, he told his audience:

- They were in the last days in which God promised to pour out His Spirit upon His people without distinction, and they shall prophesy (that means to pass on information from God or about Him Who they would represent).
- The last days would end with the coming of the Lord's great and blazing day, and everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.
- Jesus of Nazareth was a man attested to you Israelites by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through Him as you know. He was handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, and you crucified Him, but God raised Him up.
- Further, David prophesied of the resurrection of the Messiah, and all of us are witnesses to it.
- Therefore exalted at the right hand of God, He has poured out the Holy Spirit, that you both see and hear about today.
- Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.

At hearing this the audience became debilitatingly, depressingly disturbed and asked of Peter and the other apostles, "what should we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about 3000 persons were added. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and the prayers.

So, the biblical activity of glossolalia, or "speaking in tongues," has nothing to do with uncontrolled blabbering or pretending to communicate with angels, or talking in languages that you have never learned, or talking to God in a language that suggests that you might be holier than others. No, it's conversing in a language known to both speaker and hearer with content empowered by the Spirit.

Conclusion

We have examined three biblical houses that were filled - all filled with God. In the smoke-filled house of Isaiah 6, God is the focus, and in the scent-filled house of Lazarus, Jesus is the focus, and in the sound-filled Jerusalem house of Acts 2, the Holy Spirit is the focus. Each of these houses captures a different human sense - sight and touch in Isaiah 6, the olfactory sense in John 12, and our sense of hearing in Acts 2 ([Lee](#)).

**Note: Headings in
this menu are
hyperlinks. Click on
them to go to the
relevant page**

[Introduction](#)

[1 God fills with smoke](#)

[Father is the focus](#)

[Earthly king dead](#)

[Heavenly king alive](#)

[The King's palace](#)

[The King's temple](#)

[The seraphim](#)

[2 Mary fills with scent](#)

[Jesus is the focus](#)

[Nard](#)

[Lavender](#)

[Foot washing](#)

[His feet on Olivet](#)

[3.Spirit fills with sound](#)

[Spirit is the focus](#)

[Other tongues](#)

[Tongues of fire](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[References](#)

12/12



References

- Abarim Publications, House: <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/o/o-i-k-o-sfin.html>
- Abarim Publications, <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/g/g-l-om-s-s-a.html>
- Alexandre, H. (2019). The Nard of Mary-Magdalene, Perfume Chronicles, <https://www.theperfumechronicles.com/chronicles/nard>
- Chaim Bentorah (<https://www.chaimbentorah.com/2021/03/hebrew-word-study-train-shul-לשול/>)
- Coakley, J. F. The Anointing at Bethany and the Priority of John, Journal of Biblical Literature (1988) 107 (2): 241–256. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3267698>.
- doTERRA, https://www.doterra.com/AU/en_AU/p/spikenard-oil
- Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Isaiah 6.
- Jerusalem of gold (<https://jerusalemofgold.org.uk/hebraic-and-prophetic-teaching/all-about-the-feet.htm>)
- Jewish Virtual Library
- Kurek-Chomycz, D. A. (2010). The Fragrance of Her Perfume: The Significance of Sense Imagery in John's Account of the Anointing in Bethany. Novum Testamentum, 52(4), 334–354. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25750743>.
- Lee, D. (2010). The Gospel of John and the Five Senses. Journal of Biblical Literature, 129(1), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/27821008>.
- Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament; Isaiah 6.
- Lietzmann, Hans, The Beginnings of the Christian Church, De Gruyter, 2021.
- Neril, Yonatan, Judaism and Environmentalism: Bal Tashchit (https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1892179/jewish/Judaism-and-Environmentalism-Bal-Tashchit.htm).
- Rivka Sari, aytzchayim.com.
- Scents of Earth, <https://scents-of-earth.com/spikenard-root-nardostachys-jatamansi-india/>
- Taliesin 2021: <https://sabbatsandsabbaths.com/2021/06/30/lavender-the-great-nard-controversy/>
- Zerhusen, B. (1995). An Overlooked Judean Diglossia in Acts 2? Biblical Theology Bulletin: A Journal of Bible and Theology, 25, 118 - 130.