

## Characterization in Luke 1.5-20: establishing a network of scriptural echoes at the outset

“priestly order of **Abijah**”

### **ECHOING:**

heads of ancestral houses of the priests and of the Levites...the eighth to **Abijah** (1 Chronicles 24.6, 10; cf. Nehemiah 12)

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“Both of them were **righteous before God, living blamelessly** according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord.”

### **ECHOING NOAH:**

“Noah was a **righteous man, blameless** in his generation” (Genesis 6.9)

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“But they had **no children, because Elizabeth was barren**, and both were getting on in years.”

### **ECHOING ABRAM AND SARAI:**

“Now Sarai was **barren; she had no child.**” (Gen 11.30)

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“...he was chosen by lot, according to the **custom of the priesthood**, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense.”

### **ECHOING AARON:**

Aaron shall offer fragrant incense on it; every morning when he dresses the lamps he shall offer it, and when Aaron sets up the lamps in the evening, he shall offer it, a regular incense offering before the LORD throughout your generations. (Exodus 30.7-8)

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**Angelic birth annunciation type-scene, following this pattern:**

1. appearance of angel/God
2. fear or prostration
3. divine message in several of 8 possible parts
4. objection or request for sign
5. giving of sign

### **ECHOING:**

**Abram/Sarai** (Genesis 16.7-12)

**Manoah and his unnamed wife** (Judges 13.3-9, 17-21)

“When Zechariah saw [the angel Gabriel], he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah..."”

#### ECHOING:

I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels who present the prayers of the saints and enter into the presence of the glory of the Holy One." They were both alarmed; and they fell upon their faces, for they were afraid. But he said to them, "Do not be afraid; you will be safe." (Tobit 12.15-17)

“...and I [Daniel] heard a human voice by the Ulai, calling, "Gabriel, help this man understand the vision." So he came near where I stood; and when he came, I became frightened and fell prostrate....  
“He said, "Do not fear, greatly beloved, you are safe. Be strong and courageous!" (Daniel 8.16-17; 10.19)

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“You will have joy and gladness.”

#### ECHOING

“With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. In the place of ancestors you, O king, shall have sons; you will make them princes in all the earth.” (Psalm 45.15-16; also, Psalm 51.8)

“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isaiah 35.10; also, Isaiah 51.3)

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“He must never drink wine or strong drink...”

#### ECHOING

“Speak to the Israelites and say to them: When either men or women make a special vow, the vow of a nazirite, to separate themselves to the LORD, they shall separate themselves from wine and strong drink...” (Numbers 6.1-2)

“And the LORD spoke to Aaron: Drink no wine or strong drink, neither you nor your sons, when you enter the tent of meeting, that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations.” (Leviticus 10.8-9)

“Now be careful not to drink wine or strong drink, or to eat anything unclean, for you shall conceive and bear a son. No razor is to come on his head, for the boy [Samson] shall be a nazirite to God from birth. It is he who shall begin to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13.4-5)

She made this vow: "O LORD of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him [Samuel] before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." (1 Samuel 1.11)

“He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

#### ECHOING

“Lo, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse.” (Malachi 4.5-6)

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Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I know that this is so? For I am an old man, and my wife is getting on in years.”

#### ECHOING

But [Abraham] said, “O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?” (Genesis 15.6)

“Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed, and said to himself, “Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear a child?” (Genesis 17.17)

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.” (Genesis 18.11)

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“I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.”

#### ECHOING

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns.” (Isaiah 52.7; also, Isaiah 40.9; 61.1)