

65. And fear came upon all their neighbors. And in all the mountains of Yehuda these things were spoken of. 66. And all who heard were thinking in their hearts and saying, “What indeed will this boy be?” and the hand of Master YHWH was with him. 67. And his father Zakharyah was filled with the Ruach haKodesh and he prophesied and said,¹⁰

Strophe 1¹¹

Stiche 1 68a “Blessed is Master YHWH the Elohim of Israel,¹²

Stiche 2 68b Who has visited his people and wrought salvation to it.

Stiche 3 69a And he has raised up a horn of salvation

Stiche 4 69b For us in the house of Dawid his servant.

Stiche 5 70 As he spoke by the mouth of his Set Apart prophets who were from old,

Stiche 6 71a That he would save us from our enemies

Stiche 7 71b And from the hand of all who hate us

Strophe 2

Stiche 1 72a And he has shown his mercy to our fathers

Stiche 2 72b And has remembered his Set Apart covenant,

Stiche 3 73 And the oaths that he swore to Awraham our father that he would give to us.

Stiche 4 74a That we would be delivered from the hand of our enemies.

Stiche 5 74b And we might serve before Him without fear

Stiche 6 75a All the days of our days in ritual purity¹³

Stiche 7 75b In Separateness and Righteousness

Strophe 3

Stiche 1 76a. And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High,¹⁴

Stiche 2 76b For you will go before the face¹⁵ of Master YHWH to prepare His way.¹⁶

Stiche 3 77 So that He might give the knowledge of life to his people in the forgiveness of their sins.

Stiche 4 78a By the kindness of the mercy of our Elohim

Stiche 5 78b By which will visit us from a ray above.

Stiche 6 79a To enlighten those who are in darkness

Stiche 7 79b And sit in the shadows of death¹⁷ that he might direct our feet in the way of peace.”¹⁸

80. And the boy grew and was strengthened in spirit. And he was in the wilderness until the day of his appearance to Israel.

Chapter 2

1. Now it happened in those days that a decree went out from Augustus Caesar that the names of all the people of his dominion should be written down. 2. This census first happened during the governorship of Quirinius in Syria. 3. And everyone went in his own city to be registered.

¹⁰ This poetic section is best read line-by-line to show the structure of the semitic poetry which Luke employs.

¹¹ Semitic poetry uses two main structures. Similar to a stanza in the West, the *strophe* can be thought of as paragraph or main idea. Within each strophe are smaller verse-like units called *stiches*. Rhyme is meant to emphasize deeper insights within the stiches in conjunction with adjacent meaning of the text and the strophe as a whole.

¹² Psalm 41:14 (13); Psalm 72:18; Psalm 106:48

¹³ Paul Younan translates the word *kanota* here as “godliness.” However, partly due to a preference of avoiding common names and also from a technical standpoint, “ritual purity” is preferred. The reason for this is, the word is a homonym for *kahnota*, “priesthood,” the Aramaic cognate for cohen! The spelling is slightly different, but the meaning is consistent between the two words.

¹⁴ “Most high,” *aitya*, the cognate of Hebrew *aliyah*, “to go up” as in ascending towards heaven, Jerusalem, or the bimah of a shul.

- 65 והנת דחלתא על פלהון שבביהון ובכלה טורא דיהוד הלין מתמללן הוי :
- 66 וכלהון דשמעו מתחשבין הנו בלבהון נאמרין מנא פי נהנא טליא הנא ואידה דמריא אית הנת עמה : 67 נאתמלי זכריא אבוהי רוחא דקודשא נאתנבי נאמר :
- 68 מבנך הו מריא אלהה דאיסריל דסער עמה ועבד לה פורקנא :
- 69 נאקים לן קרנא דפורקנא בביתיה דדויד עבדה :
- 70 איך דמלל בפומא דנביוהי קדישא דמן עלם :
- 71 דנפרקן מן בעלדבבין ומן אידא דכלהון סנאין :
- 72 ועבד חננה עם אכהין ועהד לדיתקוהי קדישתא :
- 73 ומומתא דימא לאברהם אבון דנתל לן :
- 74 דנתפרק מן אידא דבעלדבבין ודלא דחלא נפלוח קדמוהי :
- 75 פלהון יומתן בכאנותא ובזדיקותא :
- 76 נאנת טליא נביה דעליא תתקרא תאזל איר קדם פרצופה דמריא דתטיב אורחה :
- 77 דנתל מדעא דחיא לעמה בשובקנא דחטהיהון :
- 78 ברחמא דחננא דאלהן דבהון נסערן דנחא מן רומא :
- 79 למנהרו לאילין דבחשוכא ובטללא דמותא יתבין דנתרוץ רגלין באורחא דשלמא :
- 80 טליא דין רבא הנא ומתחיל ברוחא נבחרבא איתוהי הנא עדמא ליומא דתחוייתה דלות איסריל :

: לוקא ב :

- 1 הנא דין ביומתא הנון ונפק פוקדנא מן אגוסטוס קסר דנתכתב פלה עמא דאוחדנה : 2 הדא מכתבנותא קדמייתא הנת בהגמנותא דקורינוס בסוריא : 3 נאזל הנא פלנש דנתכתב במדינתה :

15 Or presence.

16 Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3

17 Isaiah 9:1, 2

18 Magnificent poetic patterns abound in Hebrew and Aramaic. The second strophe in particular is truly amazing! Beginning with stiche 1, the statement "to show mercy" is *khnan*, the Aramaic root of *Yu-khnan* (John). Followed by stiche 2, the phrase "he remembers his covenant," *zakhar* is Hebrew for "he remembers," combined with a name for Elohim who does the remembering, or *Zakhar-Yah* (Zechariah). Stiche 3 has "the oath which YHWH swore to our father Awraham," combined with another Hebrew name for "Elohim" *Eli* and "oath" *shaba*, to form the name of the Yochanan the Immerser's mother, *Eli-shaba* (Elizabeth). There is no coincidence that the names of Zechariah, Elizabeth and John are contained poetically "within" verses that are expressly about them. Furthermore, this poem has the exact Hebrew/Aramaic pattern found in both Hebrew Scriptures and Peshitta Tanakh. The text follows Semitic rules; the first deals with the past, the second the present and third the future.