

10. The Song of Praise in 1 Chronicles 16— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) and the Introduction to the [Embedded Hymns](#).
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the "[Key to the charts](#)".

The Song of Praise in its Literary Context

- According to the introduction the Chronicler's Song of Praise is the outcome of king David's order to Asaph and his kinsmen to offer thanks to Yahweh. From a literary point of view the Song has been embedded by the author of Chronicles as the high point in David's initiatives to organize the religious ceremonies after the Ark had been brought to Jerusalem and put inside the tent that David had set up for it. The Chronicler reports that David had appointed certain Levites to serve before the Ark and to give thanks and to praise Yahweh the God of Israel. To celebrate the commencement of the cultic service David had ordained that hymns be sung to Yahweh by the Asaphites.
- The function of the Song in its literary context is very similar to that of the [Song of David](#) in 2 Samuel 22, which is the poetic high point of David's victory over his enemies and the establishment of his kingdom. Here in 1 Chronicles 16, the Song ordained by David to be sung is the poetic high point of David's activities to inaugurate the cultic service.
- This Song of Praise is the only embedded hymn of which we know for certain that it is an inset hymn, because it was composed of existent psalms and inserted into the Chronicler's story of David's involvement in the building of the temple. Naturally, these psalms, or parts of them, were not simply put together as a collage, but were clearly reworked and adapted to form the composition the author/editor had in mind. Therefore, far from being a random collage of material from three existent psalms, the Song of Praise is a numerical composition in its own right. For the numerical features of the surrounding narrative, see below Observation 2.

The way the Song is embedded in the narrative is very reminiscent of the technique used in the case of the Song at the Reed Sea (Exodus 15) and the Song of Moses (Deuteronomy 32), where a recapitulation is employed (Exod. 15:19 and Deut. 32:44) to continue the flow of thought in the narrative surrounding the Song. Here, 1 Chron. 16:37 contains a recapitulation of what is said in 16:4-7, in which the thread of the narrative interrupted by the embedded Song is picked up again.

Special Features of the Song of Praise

- The song is a deliberate, well-designed numerical composite, meticulously put together from three existing psalms. In vs. 8-22 (Canto I) the 'collator' presented **Ps. 105:1-15** almost literally, except for a few minor changes, highlighted in the [chart](#). Significantly enough, he maintained its **100** words. See the note at the bottom of the chart. In [vs. 23-33](#) (Canticle II.1-2) he offers a shorter version of **Psalm 96**, comprising **96** of the 112 words of the psalm. This section has been heavily reworked, partly also for logotechnical reasons. It has a distinct meaningful centre of its own: vs. 28-29b. Finally, in vs. 34-36 (Canticle II.3) he adapted the text of **Ps. 106:1** and **47-48** so as to achieve precisely **34** (2 x **17**) words. This brings the number of words in Canto II (vs. 23-36) to **130** (5 x **26**), and the number of words in the Song as a whole to **230** (10 x **23**), with **204** (12 x **17**) before, and **26** after *atnach* (A). The significant compositional formula, **230 = 204 + 26**, has clearly been achieved by manipulating with the *atnach*: totally omitting it in vs. 8-28 and employing it further only in vs. 29, 33, 35 and 36. The Song of Praise as a whole has two distinct meaningful centres: each of which is an impressive call to praise. See Observation 1.

Strophic structure - Canto boundary: || Canticle boundary |

- 8-10, 11-13 | 14-16, 17-18 | 19-20, 21-22 || 23-24, 25-27 | 28-30, 31-33 | 34-36 (2 cantos with 11 strophes, 31 verselines and 64 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words from Psalms 105 and 106; **d**: words from Psalm 96.

		Total	a	b	c	d
7	בָּנִים תִּהְיוּ אֲנִי נִתַּן דְּוִיד בְּרֵאשׁ לְהָרוֹת לַיהוָה בִּיד־אֶסֶף וְאַתִּיו: פ Introduction, v. 7	6 2 3 11	6 2 3		6 2 3	
8 (105:1)	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה קִרְאוּ בְשִׁמּוֹ הוֹדִיעוּ בְּעַמִּים עֲלִילְתִּיו: v. 8	4 3 7	4 3		4 3	
9 (105:2)	שִׁירוּ לוֹ זַמְרוּ-לוֹ שִׁיחוּ בְּכָל-נַפְלְאֹתָיו: v. 9	4 3 7	4 3		4 3	
10 (105:3)	הִתְהַלְלוּ בְּשֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ יִשְׁמַח לֵב מִבְּקִשׁוֹ יְהוָה: v. 10	3 4 7	3 4		3 4	
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 8-10	21	21	0	21	0
11 (105:4)	דַּרְשׁוּ יְהוָה וְעִזּוּ בְּקִשׁוֹ פָּנָיו תִּמְדוּ: v. 11	3 3 6	3 3		3 3	
12 (105:5)	זְכְרוּ נַפְלְאֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה מִפְתִּיו וּמִשְׁפָּטֵי-פִיהוּ: v. 12	4 3 7	4 3		4 3	
	Total, v. 8-12	34	34	0	34	0
13 (105:6, אֲבָרְהָם)	זָרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדּוֹ בְּנֵי יַעֲקֹב בְּחִירָיו: v. 13	3 3 6	3 3		3 3	
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 11-13	19	19	0	19	0
	Total, v. 10-13	26	26	0	26	0
	Canticle I.1 Total, v. 8-13	40	40	0	40	0
14 (105:7)	הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ מִשְׁפָּטָיו: v. 14	3 3 6	3 3		3 3	
15 (105:8, זָכַר)	זָכְרוּ לְעוֹלָם בְּרִיתוֹ דְּבַר צִוְיָה לְאֵלֶיךָ הָדוֹר: v. 15	3 4 7	3 4		3 4	
	Total, v. 12-15	26	26	0	26	0

16 (105:9)	אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת אֶת־אֲבֹתָם וּשְׁבוּעָתוֹ לְיִצְחָק: v. 16	9	4	4	4			
			<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>			
			6 = 6	+ 0 = 6	+ 0 = 6			
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 14-16		19	= 19	+ 0 = 19	+ 0 = 19		
17 (105:10)	וַיַּעֲמִידָהּ לְיַעֲקֹב לְחֶק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרִית עוֹלָם: v. 17	10	3	3	3			
			<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>			
			6 = 6	+ 0 = 6	+ 0 = 6			
	Total, v. 10-17		51	= 51	+ 0 = 51	+ 0 = 51		
18*	לֵאמֹר לְךָ אֶתֵּן אֶת־אֶרֶץ־כְּנָעַן (105:11, אֶת־אֶרֶץ) חָבַל נַחֲלַתְכֶם: v. 18	11	6	6	6			
			<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>			
			8 = 8	+ 0 = 8	+ 0 = 8			
	Strophe 4 Total, v. 17-18		14	= 14	+ 0 = 14	+ 0 = 14		
	Canticle I.2 Total, v. 14-18		33	= 33	+ 0 = 33	+ 0 = 33		
19 (105:12, בְּהִיּוֹתֶם)	בְּהִיּוֹתְכֶם מִתִּי מִסְפָּר כַּמַּעֲט וְגָרִים בָּהּ: v. 19	12	3	3	3			
			<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>			
			6 = 6	+ 0 = 6	+ 0 = 6			
	Total, v. 16-19		26	= 26	+ 0 = 26	+ 0 = 26		
20 (105:13, מִמְּמַלְכָּה)	וַיִּתְּהַלְכוּ מִגְּוֵי אֱלֹהֵי וּמִמְּמַלְכָּה אֱלֹהִים אַחֵר: v. 20	13	4	4	4			
			<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>			
			8 = 8	+ 0 = 8	+ 0 = 8			
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 19-20		14	= 14	+ 0 = 14	+ 0 = 14		
	Total, v. 16-20		34	= 34	+ 0 = 34	+ 0 = 34		
21 (105:14, אָדָם)	לֹא־הֵנִיחַ לְאִישׁ לַעֲשֹׂקָם וַיִּזְכַּח עֲלֵיהֶם מְלָכִים: v. 21	14	4	4	4			
			<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>			
22 (105:15, וְלִנְבִיאִי)	אֶל־תִּגְעוּ בְּמִשְׁחֵי וּבְנִבְיָאִי אֶל־תִּרְעוּ: פ v. 22	15	3	3	3			
			<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>			
			6 = 6	+ 0 = 6	+ 0 = 6			
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 21-22		13	= 13	+ 0 = 13	+ 0 = 13		
	Canticle I.3 Total, v. 19-22		27	= 27	+ 0 = 27	+ 0 = 27		
8-22 (105:1-15)	Canto I Total, v. 8-22		100	= 100	+ 0 = 100	+ 0 = 100		
23 (96: 1 b)	שִׁירוֹ לְיִתְהוּהָ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ (96:2b, לְיִוָּם) : שְׁוֹעָתוֹ: v. 23	16	4	4	4			
			<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>			
			9 = 9	+ 0 = 9	+ 0 = 9			
24 (96:3, כְּבוֹדוֹ)	סִפְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאֵתֵּי: (230=104+22+104) Meaningful centre v. 24	17	4	4	4			
			<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>			
			7 = 7	+ 0 = 7	+ 0 = 7			
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 23-24		16	= 16	+ 0 = 16	+ 0 = 16		
25	כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֵלָל מְאֹד (96:4, נִזְרָא) : הוּא עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים: v. 25	18	5	5	5			
			<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>			
			10 = 10	+ 0 = 10	+ 0 = 10			
	Total, v. 23-25		26	= 26	+ 0 = 26	+ 0 = 26		

26 (96:5)	כִּי כָל־אֱלֹהֵי הָעַמִּים אֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְּנָה שָׁמַיִם עָשָׂה: v. 26	19	5	5	5	3	3	3	8 = 8 + 0 = 0 + 8
27	הוֹדוּ וְתִדְרֹר לְפָנָיו עַז וְחִדְוָה בְּמִקְמוֹ: (וַתִּפְאֶרֶת בְּמִקְדָּשׁוֹ) v. 27	20	3	3	3	3	3	3	6 = 6 + 0 = 0 + 6
Strophe 8 Total, v. 25-27			24 = 24 + 0 = 0 + 24						
Canticle II.1 Total, v. 23-27			40 = 40 + 0 = 0 + 40						
28 (96:7)	הָבֹו לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים Middle words of 23-33: הָבֹו לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז: v. 28	21	4	4	4				
29 (96 = 40 + 16 + 40)	הָבֹו לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שָׁמוֹ (לְחִצְרוֹתָיו) שָׁאוּ מִנְחָה וּכְאוּ לְפָנָיו (96:8, 9a) הַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לַיהוָה בְּהִדְרַת־קִדְשׁ: v. 29	22	4	4	4	4	4	4	12 = 4 + 8 = 0 + 12
30 (96:9b, 10b)	(מִפְּנֵיו) חִילוּ מִלְּפָנָיו כָּל־הָאָרֶץ (96:10b) אַף־תִּפְּוֹן תִּבָּל בְּל־תַּמוּט: v. 30	23	4	4	4	5	5	9	9 = 9 + 0 = 0 + 9
Strophe 9 Total, v. 28-30			29 = 21 + 8 = 0 + 29						
31 (96:11a)	יִשְׁמְחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ (extra) וַיֵּאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם יִתְּנָה מְלֶכֶד: v. 31	24	4	4	4	4	4	8	8 = 8 + 0 = 0 + 8
32 (96:11b)	יִרְעִם הַיָּם וּמְלוֹאוֹ (96:12a, 12b) יַעֲלֶץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ: (שָׂרִי) v. 32	25	3	3	3	5	5	8	8 = 8 + 0 = 0 + 8
33 (96:12b, 13a, 13b)	אֲזוּ יִרְנְנוּ עַצְי הַיַּעַר (כָּל־עֲצֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל) (96:13a, 13b) מִלְּפָנֵי יְהוָה (96:13b, 13c) כִּי־בָא לְשַׁפּוֹט אֶת־הָאָרֶץ: (כִּי בָא כִּי בָא) v. 33	26	4	4	4	2	2	5	11 = 4 + 7 = 0 + 11
Strophe 10 Total, v. 31-33			27 = 20 + 7 = 0 + 27						
Canticle II.2 Total, v. 28-33			56 = 41 + 15 = 0 + 56						
23-33 (96:1-13b)	Total, v. 23-33		96 = 81 + 15 = 0 + 96						
34 (136:1)	הוֹדוּ לַיהוָה כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶד־וָ: v. 34	27	4	4	4	3	3	7	7 = 7 + 0 = 7 + 0
35	וַאֲמָרוּ הוֹשִׁיעֵנו אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנו (וַיִּתְּנָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ) (106:47a, 47b, 47c) וַקְּבֹצֵנו וְחִצְּלֵנו מִן־הַגּוֹיִם (106:47c) לְהַדְרוֹת לְשֵׁם קִדְשֶׁךָ (106:47d) לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתִהְלֶתֶךָ: v. 35	28	1	1	1	3	3	4	
36 (106:48)	בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (106:48b) מִן־הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם	30	4	4	4	3	3	2	13 = 8 + 5 = 13 + 0

(106:48c, וַאֲמַר)	וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעַם אָמֵן	31	4	4	4
(106:48d, תִּלְלוּ־יְהוָה)	וְתִלְלוּ לַיהוָה: פ		2	2	2
	v. 36		14	= 8	+ 6 = 14 + 0
35-36 (Psalm 106:47-48)	Total, v. 35-36		27	= 16	+ 11 = 27 + 0
	Excluding וַאֲמַר, 'And say', Total v. 35-36		26	= 15	+ 11 = 26 + 0
	Canticle II.3 Strophe 11 Total, v. 34-36		34	= 23	+ 11 = 34 + 0
	Canto II Total, v. 23-36		130	= 104	+ 26 = 130 + 0
	Cantos I-II Total, v. 8-36		230	= 204	+ 26 = 134 + 0
	Total, v. 7-36		241	= 212	+ 29 = 145 + 96

* I read an extra word, אַת, in v. 18a (as in Ps. 105:11a), taking the loss of this word as due to a scribal error: a clear case of haplography.

▲ The remarkable positioning of the *atnach* in particular sections of the psalm plays an important role in the author/editor's desire to weave the two divine name numbers as much as possible into the fabric of his text. Consult the [General Introduction](#), pp. 4-6.

Observations

- In terms of its 230 words, the 22 words in vs. 23b-25 constitute the arithmetic centre of the psalm, flanked by **104** (4 x **26**) words on either side (230 = **104** + **22** + **104**):

בְּשָׂרוֹ מִיּוֹם־אֶל־יוֹם יְשׁוּעָתוֹ:
 סִפְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם אֶת־כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּכָל־הָעַמִּים נִפְלְאוֹתָיו:
 כִּי גָדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד וְנוֹרָא הוּא עַל־כָּל־אֱלֹהִים:

Proclaim his salvation from day to day!

Declare his **glory** among the nations His marvellous deeds to all the people!

For YHWH is great and most worthy of praise and to be held in awe above all gods!

In a song of praise these words are most appropriate and may be regarded as the deliberately designed meaningful centre. The pivotal position of the call to praise is highlighted by the fact that it is flanked by 4 x **26** words on either side.

As in quite a number of psalms, the Chronicler's Song of Praise has a second meaningful centre in part of the text. The **96** words of vs. 23-33 (based on Psalm **96**) have their own arithmetic centre, the **16** words of vs. 28-29b (96 = **40** + **16** + **40**), which constitute the meaningful centre:

הִבּוּ לַיהוָה מִשְׁפָּחוֹת עַמִּים	Ascribe to YHWH, you families of the nations!
הִבּוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד וְעֹז:	Ascribe to YHWH glory and might!
הִבּוּ לַיהוָה כְּבוֹד שְׁמוֹ	Ascribe to YHWH the glory due to his name!
שִׂאוּ מִנְחָה וּבֹאוּ לְפָנָיו	Bring an offering and come before him!

What makes this call to praise extra meaningful is the fact that it also echoes the words of Psalm 29:1-2.

The fact that the psalm is composed of **230** words, a multiple of the *kabod* number **23** (11 + 2 + 6 + 4) representing God's 'glory', has probably been consciously designed, seeing the explicit reference to Yahweh's **glory** (3x) in both meaningful centres.

- Here is a survey of the numerical features of the Song and its surrounding narrative:

Narrative: 16:1	17 words in total
Narrative: 16:1-3	39 words in total (the YHWH ' <i>echad</i> ' number)
Narrative: 16:4-5	32 words in total (the <i>kabod</i> number)
Narrative: 16:37-38	26 words (13a + 13b): 15 in v. 37 and 11 in v. 38
Narrative: 16:40	17 words in total

Narrative: 16:40-43	52 (2 x 26) words in total
Narrative: 16:37-43	52 (2 x 26) words before <i>atnach</i>
16:7 and 36c-d	17 words in total (the inner framework)
16:8-12	34 (2 x 17) words in total
16:10-13	26 words in total
16:12-15	26 words in total
16:10-17	51 (3 x 17) words in total
16:16-19	26 words in total
16:23-25	26 words in total
16:8-22	100 words in total (based on Psalm 105:1-15)
16:23-33	96 words in total (based on Psalm 96)
16:35	13 words in total (the 'echad number)
16:35-36	26 words, excluding the introductory formula (אָמַרְי)
16:34-36	34 (2 x 17) words in total
16:23-36, Canto II	130 (5 x 26) words in total: 104a (4 x 26) + 26b
16:8-36, Cantos I-II	230 (10 x 23) words in total: 204a (12 x 17) + 26b

For the numerical value of the compositional numbers **13**, **23**, **32**, and **39**, see the [General Introduction](#), p. 11.

3. Including the **introduction** (v.7) and the **conclusion** (v. 36c), the name יהוה occurs altogether **17** times, which is obviously deliberately designed (7a, 8a, 10b, 11a, 14a, 23a, 25a, 26b, 28a, 28b, 29a, 29c, 31b, 33b, 34a, 36a, 36c-d). The **17** occurrences of the divine name correspond to the **17** words framing the psalm ($230 = 11 + 213 + 6$).

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