

Psalm 5— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the [General Introduction](#) as well as the Introduction to [Book I](#).
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the "[Key to the charts](#)".

Specific features of Psalm 5

- The author used syntax as a device to weave extra divine name numbers into the fabric of the text, a feature this psalm shares, among others, with Psalms 1 and 6.
- Characteristic is the sudden change from addressing God directly to speaking about him (5 words in vs. 7b-c), an attention drawing literary technique commonly employed throughout the Book of Psalms. Its purpose here is primarily to highlight these 5 words, but also to alert the reader to the meaningful centre of the text, vs. 8.
- A feature this psalm shares with other psalms is the obvious concatenation of divine name numbers and the conscious use of the YHWH *echad* formula, **39 = 26 + 13**.
- A feature peculiar to this psalm, as the **5th** psalm in the Masoretic numbering, is the striking use of the number **5** in the numerical fabric of the text.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt: 2-4 || 5-6b, 6c-7 | 8-9 || 10, 11 | 12-13 (3 cantos and 7 strophes, with 15 verselines and 32 cola, taking vs. 6-7 as 3 bicolic verselines, v. 9 as a bicolon by disregarding the *atnach*, and considers vs. 3 and 12 tricola).
- Fokkelman: 2-4, 5-7, 8-9, 10, 11, 12-13 (6 strophes with 15 verselines and 32 cola, taking vs. 6-7 as 2 verselines and v. 12 as 2 bicolic verselines; disregarding the *atnach*, he takes v. 3 as a bicolon).
- Labuschagne: 2-4 || 5-7, 8, 9 || 10, 11, 12-13 (3 cantos and 7 strophes, with 14 verselines and 33 cola, taking not only v. 3 but also v. 9 as a tricolon because of the *atnach*; finally, I take vs. 6-7 as 2 tricola).
- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, CAS, Psalm 5, § 6.

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the *atnach*.
- Column **c**: words in the main clauses; **d**: words in the subordinate clauses.
- The numbering of the verselines is in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְמִנְצִיחַ אֱלֹהֵי הַנְּחִילוֹת מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד: 1	5	= 5	+ 0		
2	אָמְרֵי הָאֵיזִינָה יְהוָה 1	3	3		3	
	בֵּינָה הַגִּינִי:	2	2		2	
	Total, v. 2	5	= 5	+ 0	= 5	+ 0
3	הַקְּשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שׁוֹעֵי 2	3	3		3	
	מִלְפִי וְאֵלֶּיָּהּ	2	2		2	
	כִּי־אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל:	3		3		3
	Total, v. 3	8	= 5	+ 3	= 5	+ 3
	Total, v. 2-3	13	= 10	+ 3	= 10	+ 3

4	3	יהנה בקר תשמע קולי ^א בקר אערך לך ואצפה: Total, v. 4	4	4	4	<u>8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0</u>
		Canto I Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-4	21	= 14	+ 7	= 18 + 3
5	4	כי לא אל-חפץ רשע אטה ^א לא יגדך רע: Total, v. 5 Total, v. 4-5	6	6	6	<u>9 = 6 + 3 = 3 + 6</u>
			17	= 10	+ 7	= 11 + 6
6	5	לא-יתצבו הוללים לנגד עיניך ^א שנאת כל-פעלי און: Total, v. 6 Total, v. 4-6 Total, v. 2-6	3	3	3	<u>9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0</u>
			26	= 15	+ 11	= 20 + 6
			39	= 25	+ 14	= 30 + 9
7	6	תאבד דברי כזב איש-דמים ומרמה יתעב יהנה: Total, v. 7 Strophe 2 Total, v. 5-7 Total, v. 4-7 Total, v. 2-7	3	3	3	<u>8 = 8 + 0 = 8 + 0</u>
			26	= 19	+ 7	= 20 + 6
			34	= 23	+ 11	= 28 + 6
			47	= 33	+ 14	= 38 + 9
8	7	Middle words: ואני ברב חסדך אבוא ביתך ^א אשתתנה אל-היכל-קדשך ביראתך: 52 + 2 + 52 Middle colon: Strophe 3 Total, v. 8	5	5	5	<u>10 = 5 + 5 = 10 + 0</u>
9	8	יהנה נחני בצדקתך למען שורכי ^א תישר לפני הרך: Strophe 4 Total, v. 9 Total, v. 7-9 Canto II Total, v. 5-9 Canto I-II Total, v. 2-9	3	3	3	<u>8 = 5 + 3 = 6 + 2</u>
			26	= 18	+ 8	= 24 + 2
			44	= 29	+ 15	= 36 + 8
			65	= 43	+ 22	= 54 + 11
10	9	כי אין בפיהו נכונה קרבים תוות קבר-פתוח גרונם ^א לשונם יחליקון: Strophe 5 Total, v. 10	4	4	4	<u>11 = 9 + 2 = 7 + 4</u>
			2	2	2	
	10		3	3	3	
			2	2	2	

11	הַאֲשִׁימִם אֱלֹהִים	11	2	2	2
	יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם		2	2	2
	בְּרַב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם תִּדְרִיחֵמוֹ	12	3	3	3
	כִּי־מָרוּ בָךְ:		3	3	3
	Strophe 6 Total, v. 11		10	= 7 + 3	= 7 + 3
	Total, v. 10-11		21	= 16 + 5	= 14 + 7
	Total, v. 8-11		39	= 26 + 13	= 30 + 9
	Total, v. 5-11		65	= 45 + 20	= 50 + 15
12	וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כָּל־חֹסֵי בָךְ	13	4	4	4
	לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ וְתִסְבֵּךְ עָלֵינוּ		4	4	4
	וַיַּעֲלֵצוּ בָךְ אֲהַבֵי שְׁמֹךְ:		4	4	4
	Total, v. 12		12	= 8 + 4	= 12 + 0
13	כִּי־אַתָּה תִּבְרַךְ צְדִיק יְהוָה	14	5	5	5
	כַּצְּנֹה רְצוֹן תַּעֲמִרְנוּ:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 13		8	= 5 + 3	= 0 + 8
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 12-13		20	= 13 + 7	= 12 + 8
	Canto III Total, v. 10-13		41	= 29 + 12	= 26 + 15
	Total, v. 8-13		59	= 39 + 20	= 42 + 17
	Canto II-III Total, v. 5-13		85	= 58 + 27	= 62 + 23
	Total, v. 2-13		106	= 72 + 34	= 80 + 26
	With the heading, v. 1-13		111	= 77 + 34	

Observations

- The two middle words (in box: $106 = 52 + \boxed{2} + 52$) are the first words of the middle colon, v. 8b, which may for good reasons be regarded as the psalm's meaningful centre ($33 = 16 + 1 + 16$):

אֲשַׁתְּחֶנָּה אֶל־הַיְכָל־קִדְשֶׁךָ בְּיִרְאַתֶּךָ

I will worship at your holy temple in awe of you.

I cannot, of course, exclude the possibility that the middle verseline, v. 8, flanked by 7 lines on either side ($15 = 7 + 1 + 7$), would also be an excellent candidate, even though it is slightly off-centre in terms of words ($106 = 47 + 10 + 49$):

וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חַסְדֶּךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתֶךָ ^ אֲשַׁתְּחֶנָּה אֶל־הַיְכָל־קִדְשֶׁךָ בְּיִרְאַתֶּךָ:

As for me, through your great love, I may enter your house //

I may worship at your holy temple in awe of you.

However, I have a preference for the middle colon, because it happens to be the 17th colon, being 'embraced' by 17 cola ($16 + 1 | 1 + 16$), and consists of exactly 5 words, which is most significant as I shall explain in the next Observation.

- Pieter van der Lugt has drawn my attention to the deliberate use of the number 5, which can hardly be a matter of chance. The psalm opens with a 5-word verseline and is made up of 15 (3 x 5) verselines, with 10 (2 x 5) words in the middle verseline. Moreover, exactly 5 words are explicitly used to speak about God (v. 7b-c), and Cantos I-II have 65 (13 x 5) words. To crown it all, the name YHWH appears exactly 5 times. Finally, the editor of the Psalter was fully aware of this, because, in my opinion, he deliberately provided the psalm with a 5-word heading. This is not surprising, seeing that we have to do with the 5th psalm in the Masoretic numbering!

For comparable cases, see Observation 5 in my Analysis of [Psalm 13](#), Observation 1 in my Analysis of [Psalm 17](#), and Observation 5 in that of [Psalm 31](#). This striking phenomenon seems to suggest that the numbering of the psalms played a role in the composition of the psalms in Book I. See the chapter “Compositional Structure of the Psalter”, “Book I as a whole”.

3. The speaker addresses God throughout the psalm directly, except for the **5** words in **vs. 7b-c**, where he suddenly speaks about God. This is obviously to highlight and emphasize the contents of vs. 7b-c and to alert the reader/listener to the approaching centre of the text. For the use of this striking technique for highlighting the centre, see the [General Introduction](#) under “The centre of the text”, “Special devices to highlight the meaningful centre”.

4. In vs. 2-7 the divine name numbers are carefully concatenated into the text:

vs. 4-5 **17**

vs. 6 **9**

vs. 4-6 **26**

vs. 7 **8**

vs. 4-7 **34** (2 x **17**), followed by **26** words in vs. 7-9.

For the concatenation, see Observation 3 in my Analyses of [Psalm 1](#) and [Psalm 29](#).

5. The YHWH *echad* formula, **39 = 26 + 13**, can easily be detected in the **39** words of vs. 2-6 (**13** in vs. 2-3 and **26** in vs. 4-6). Additionally, the formula appears explicitly in the compositional formula of vs. 8-11 (**39** words, with **26** before, and **13** after *atnach*).

In the compositional formula of vs. 4-6 (**26 = 15a + 11b**) the divine name number **26** divides precisely into its two basic components: **15** (YH) and **11** (WH). Moreover, the **26** words in the subordinate clauses (Column **d**) divide into **11** (vs. 2-9) and **15** (vs. 10-13)! See Observation 2 in my Analysis of Psalm 1.

6. The divine name numbers feature additionally in the following instances:

vs. 2-13 **34** (2 x **17**) words after *atnach*

vs. 2-13 **26** words in the subordinate clauses (Column **d**)

vs. 5-13 **85** (5 x **17**) words in total.

7. As already noted, the name יהוה occurs 5 times (2a, 4a, 7c, 9a, 13a); אֱלֹהִים occurs once (5a) and אֱלֹהִים twice (3b and 11a).

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