

Psalm 26— 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](#)".

Special features of Psalm 26

- The author used in total 10 words to speak *about* God in order to achieve exactly **68** words (4 x 17) in the category ‘words spoken *to* God’ in vs. 2-11. At the same time, the change in the direction of address marks v. 12 as a coda.
- The innocence of the speaker is eloquently expressed in the 2 middle verselines, **vs. 6-7**, which constitute the meaningful centre. It falls within a larger core, vs. 4-7, the protestation of innocence, which stands out as being flanked by 22 words on either side.

Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt: 1-3, 4-5 || 6-8, 9-10 || 11-12 (3 cantos with 5 strophes, 12 verselines and 25 cola, taking v. 1 as a tricolon).
- Fokkelman: 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-10, 11-12 (6 strophes with **13** verselines and **26** cola, taking the last 4 words of v. 1 as a bicolon, and regarding v. 1 as a separate strophe).
- Labuschagne: 1, 2-3 || 4-5, 6-7 || 8-10 || 11-12 (4 cantos with 6 strophes, 12 verselines and 25 cola).
- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, CAS, Psalm 26, § 6.

Logotechnical analysis

- Columns **a** and **b** show the number of words before and after the atnach.
- Column **c**: words addressed to God; **d**: words spoken about God.
- The numbering of the verselines is shown in **brown**.

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	לְדָוִד ^{Heading}	1	1			
	שָׁפְטֵנִי יְהוָה ¹	2	2		2	
	כִּי־אֲנִי בְּתַמִּי הִלַּכְתִּי ^	4	4		4	
	וּבֵיתְךָ בָּטַחְתִּי לֹא אֶמְעָד: ⁴	4		4		4
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 1	10	= 6	+ 4	= 6	+ 4
2	בְּחַנְנֵי יְהוָה וְנִסִּינִי ^	3	3		3	
	צָרַפְתָּ כְּלִי־זָהָב וְלִבִּי:	3		3	3	
	Total, v. 2	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
	Total, v. 1-2	16	= 9	+ 7	= 12	+ 4
3	כִּי־חֲסִדְךָ לִנְגֵד עֵינָי ^	4	4		4	
	וְהִתְהַלַּכְתִּי בְּאַמְתְּךָ:	2		2	2	
	Total, v. 3	6	= 4	+ 2	= 6	+ 0
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 2-3	12	= 7	+ 5	= 12	+ 0
	Canto I Total, v. 1-3	22	= 13	+ 9	= 18	+ 4

4	לא־יִשְׁכַּחַי עִם־מְתֵי־שׂוֹאֵ־ וְעַם נְעֻלְמִים לֹא אָבוֹא־ Total, v. 4	4	5	5	5	4	4	4	9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0
5	שָׁנֹאתִי קָחַל מְרַעִים־ וְעַם־רְשָׁעִים לֹא אָשֵׁב־ Total, v. 5	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	7 = 3 + 4 = 7 + 0
	Strophe 3	Total, v. 4-5				16 = 8 + 8 = 16 + 0			
		Total, v. 1-5				38 = 21 + 17 = 34 + 4			
6	אַרְחֵץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפָּי־ וְאַסְבְּקָה אֶת־מִזְבִּיחַךְ יְהוָה־ 84 = 41 + 2 + 41	6	3	3	3	4	4	4	
7	לְשִׁמְעַ בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה־ וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל־נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ־ Middle verselines (6-7): Meaningful centre	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	
	Strophe 4	Total, v. 6-7				13 = 6 + 7 = 13 + 0			
	Canto II	Total, v. 4-7				29 = 14 + 15 = 29 + 0			
		Total, v. 1-7				51 = 27 + 24 = 47 + 4			
8	יְהוָה אֶחָבְתִּי מֵעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ־ וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ־ Total, v. 8	8	4	4	4	3	3	3	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0
9	אֶל־תִּיאַסֵּף עִם־חַטָּאִים נַפְשִׁי־ וְעַם־אֲנָשֵׁי דָמִים חַיִּי־ Total, v. 9	9	5	5	5	4	4	4	9 = 5 + 4 = 9 + 0
10	אֲשֶׁר־בִּידְיָהֶם זְמָה־ וַיִּמְנָם מְלֶאכֶה שַׁחַד־ Total, v. 10	10	3	3	3	3	3	3	6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0
	Canto III	Strophe 5				22 = 12 + 10 = 22 + 0			
		Total, v. 6-10				35 = 18 + 17 = 35 + 0			
		Total, v. 1-10				73 = 39 + 34 = 69 + 4			
11	וְאֲנִי בְּתַמִּי אֶלֶךְ־ כְּדָנִי וְחַנּוּנִי־ Total, v. 11	11	3	3	3	2	2	2	5 = 5 + 0 = 5 + 0
		Total, v. 8-11				27 = 17 + 10 = 27 + 0			
		Total, v. 2-11				68 = 38 + 30 = 68 + 0			
		Total, v. 1-11				78 = 44 + 34 = 74 + 4			
12	Coda	רְגְלֵי עֲמֻדָה בְּמִישׁוֹר־ בְּמַקְהָלִים אֶבְרָךְ יְהוָה־ Total, v. 12	12	3	3	3	3	3	6 = 3 + 3 = 0 + 6
	Canto IV	Strophe 6				11 = 8 + 3 = 5 + 6			
		Total, v. 10-12				17 = 11 + 6 = 11 + 6			
		Total, v. 9-12				26 = 16 + 10 = 20 + 6			
		Total, v. 6-12				46 = 26 + 20 = 40 + 6			
		Total, v. 4-12				62 = 34 + 28 = 56 + 6			
		Total, v. 2-12				74 = 41 + 33 = 68 + 6			
		Total, v. 1-12				84 = 47 + 37 = 74 + 10			
		With the heading, v. 1-12				85 = 48 + 37			

Observations

1. The arithmetic centre in terms of the 84 words of the poem is constituted by the first two words of v. 6b, which cannot be regarded as meaningful. As in many psalms, the meaningful centre is to be found in terms of the poetic structure; in this case, in terms of the two middle verselines, vs. 6-7 (12 = 5 + 2 + 5):

אַרְחִץ בְּנִקְיוֹן כַּפָּי ^ וְאֶסְבְּבָה אֶת־מִזְבֵּחַךְ יְהוָה:
 לְשִׁמְעַת בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה ^ וּלְסַפֵּר כָּל־נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ:

I wash my hands in innocence // and go in procession round your altar, YHWH,
 singing aloud a song of thanksgiving // and recounting all your wondrous deeds.

This statement is an appropriate focal point at the end of the more extensive protestation of innocence in vs. 4-7 – see below Observation 3.

2. When we include the 1-word heading in the word-count, the logotechnical centre is constituted by the seven words in v. 6, making them a meaningful centre on word level: **85 = 39 + 7 + 39**. This is the reason, in my opinion, why the editor of the psalm chose a 1-word heading.
3. The sudden change in v. 1c to words spoken *about* God clearly suggests a caesura between v. 1 and v. 2. This caesura is overlooked by Van der Lugt and Christensen. In fact, Christensen shows little regard for syntax in his division of the text by assuming caesurae within indisputable syntactical units: between 2||3, 4||5 and 9||10.
4. A typical feature of the poem is that vs. 1-10 display a symmetric pattern in which the 29-word protestation of innocence is enveloped by 22 words on either side, resulting in the core being 'embraced' by 51 (3 x 17) words [22 + 29 = 51 = 29 + 22]:

vs. 1-3 Canto I 22 (2 x 11) words
 vs. 4-7 Canto II 29 words
 vs. 8-10 Cantos III-IV 22 (2 x 11) words.

The fact that vs. 1-3 and 8-10 are both made up of 22 words may suggest that the 22 letters of the alphabetic acrostic in Psalm 25 still reverberate in Psalm 26.

5. The divine name numbers occur in the following instances:

vs. 1-5	34 (2 x 17) words addressed to God, with 17 words after atnach
vs. 1-7	51 (3 x 17) words in total
vs. 6-10	17 words after atnach
vs. 2-11	68 (4 x 17) words addressed to God
vs. 8-11	17 words before atnach
vs. 1-11	78 (3 x 26) words in total
vs. 6-12	26 words before atnach
vs. 10-12	17 words in total
vs. 9-12	26 words in total
vs. 4-12	34 (2 x 17) words before atnach
vs. 1-12	26 cola in total and 85 (5 x 17) words including the heading.
6. In terms of form and content, v. 12 is clearly a coda. For the coda, see the General Introduction, "The use of a coda as a device for conclusion".
7. The name יהוה occurs 6 times (vs. 1a, 1c, 2a, 6b, 8a, and 12b).

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 Dr. C.J. Labuschagne Senior Lecturer in Semitic Languages (retired),
 Brinkhorst 44 University of Pretoria, South Africa
 9751 AT Haren (Gron) and
 The Netherlands Professor of Old Testament (retired),
labuschagne.cj@planet.nl University of Groningen, The Netherlands