

Psalm 68— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

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

Specific features of Psalm 68

- The defining characteristic of this psalm is the ingenious use of the 2nd person form of address to give structure and unity to the text, in such a way that additional instances of divine name numbers are woven into the fabric of the text. It shares this feature with Psalms 58-60, 62, 63, 69, and many others.
- Another distinct feature is the use of no less than six different designations of God, with **26** occurrences of אֱלֹהִים, 'God', and **17** instances of the other five together.

Strophic structure - Canto boundary: || Stanza/Sub-canto/Canticle boundary: |

- Van der Lugt and Labuschagne: 2-3, 4-5, 6-7 | 8-9, 10-11 | 12-14a, 14b-15 | 16-17, 18-19 || 20-21, 22-24 | 25-26, 27-28 | 29-30, 31-32 | 33-34, 35-36 (2 cantos with 4 sub-cantos and 8 canticles, 17 strophes, 36 verselines and 81 cola).
- Fokkelman: 2-4, 5-7 | 8-9, 10-11 || 12-14a, 14b-15 | 16-17, 18-19 | 20-21, 22-24 || 25-26, 27-28 | 29-30, 31-32 | 33-34, 35-36b, 36c (3 sections with 8 stanzas, 16 strophes, 36 verselines and 86 cola).

Logotechnical analysis

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

		Total	a	b	c	d
1	Heading, v. 1 לְמִנְצַח לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר שִׁיר:	4 = 4 + 0				
2	יְקוֹם אֱלֹהִים יְפוּצוּ אֹיְבָיו ^א וַיְנוֹסוּ מִשְׁנֵאוֹ מִפְּנֵיו: Total, v. 2	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0	4	3	4	
3	כִּהְגִּדְף עֶשֶׂן תִּגְדֶּף ^ב כִּהְמַס דּוֹגַג מִפְּנֵי־אִשׁ ^א יֶאֱבְדוּ רְשָׁעִים מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים: Total, v. 3 Strophe 1 Total, v. 2-3	11 = 7 + 4 = 8 + 3 18 = 11 + 7 = 15 + 3	3	4	3	3
4	וַצַּדִּיקִים יִשְׁמְחוּ וְעִלְצוּ ^ב לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁיִשׂוּ בְשִׂמְחָה: Total, v. 4 Total, v. 2-4	7 = 7 + 0 = 7 + 0 25 = 18 + 7 = 22 + 3	3	4	3	4
5	שִׁירוֹ לְאֱלֹהִים זָמְרוּ שְׁמוֹ ^ב סֵלוֹ לְרִכֵּב בְּעָרְבוֹת בֵּיתָ שְׁמוֹ וְעִלְזוּ לִפְנֵיו: Total, v. 5 Strophe 2 Total, v. 4-5	11 = 11 + 0 = 11 + 0 18 = 18 + 0 = 18 + 0	4	3	4	4

6	אָבִי יְתוּמִים וְדִין אֱלֹמֵנוֹתָּ אֱלֹהִים בְּמַעוֹן קָדְשׁוֹ: Total, v. 6	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0
7	אֱלֹהִים מוֹשִׁיב יְחִידִים בֵּיתָה מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים בְּפוֹשְׁרוֹתָּ אֶךְ סוֹרְרִים שְׁכֵנוֹ צְחִיקָה: Total, v. 7	6	4	4	4	3	3	3	11 = 7 + 4 = 11 + 0
	Strophe 3 Total, v. 6-7								18 = 11 + 7 = 18 + 0
	Canticle I.1.1 Total, v. 2-7								54 = 40 + 14 = 51 + 3
8	אֱלֹהִים בְּצִאתְךָ לִפְנֵי עַמְּךָ בְּצִעְדְּךָ בִישִׁמוֹן סֵלָה: Total, v. 8	7	4	4	4	2	2	2	6 = 4 + 2 = 0 + 6
9	אֶרֶץ רְעֵשָׁה אַף־שָׁמַיִם נָטְפוּ מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים זֶה סִינַי מִפְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: Total, v. 9	8	5	5	5	4	4	4	13 = 9 + 4 = 0 + 13
	Strophe 4 Total, v. 8-9								19 = 13 + 6 = 0 + 19
10	גִּשְׁם גְּדֵבוֹת תִּנְיָף אֱלֹהִים נִחְלַתְךָ וְנִלְאָה אֶתָּה כּוֹנֵנְתָה: Total, v. 10	9	4	4	4	4	4	4	8 = 4 + 4 = 0 + 8
11	תִּיִתְךָ יִשְׁבוּ־בָהּ תִּכִּין בְּטוֹבְתְךָ לְעֵנִי אֱלֹהִים: Total, v. 11	10	3	3	3	4	4	4	7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7
	Strophe 5 Total, v. 10-11								15 = 7 + 8 = 0 + 15
	Canticle I.1.2 Total, v. 8-11								34 = 20 + 14 = 0 + 34
	Sub-canto I.1 Total, v. 2-11								88 = 60 + 28 = 51 + 37
12	אֲדָנִי יִתֵּן־אִמְרָה תִּמְבְּשְׁרוֹת צָבָא רָב: Total, v. 12	11	3	3	3	3	3	3	6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0
13	מַלְכֵי צְבָאוֹת יִדְרוֹן יִדְרוֹן וְנֹת בֵּית תְּחַלֵּק שָׁלָל: Total, v. 13	12	4	4	4	4	4	4	
14a	אִם־תִּשְׁכַּחוּ בֵּין שְׁפֹתַיִם Strophe 6 Total, v. 12-14a								18 = 11 + 7 = 18 + 0
14b-c	כִּנְפֵי יוֹנָה נֶחְפָּה בְּכֶסֶף וְאֶבְרוֹתֶיהָ בִּירְקָרֵק חֲרוּץ: Total, v. 14b-c	13	4	4	4	3	3	3	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0
15	בְּפֶרֶשׁ שָׂדֵי מְלָכִים בָּהּ תִּשְׁלַג בְּצִלְמוֹן: Total, v. 15	14	4	4	4	2	2	2	6 = 6 + 0 = 6 + 0
	Strophe 7 Total, v. 14b-15								13 = 10 + 3 = 13 + 0
	Canticle I.2.1 Total, v. 12-15								31 = 21 + 10 = 31 + 0
16	הַר־אֱלֹהִים הַר־בְּשׁוֹן הַר גְּבֻנִים הַר־בְּשׁוֹן: Total, v. 16	15	4	4	4	4	4	4	8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0

17	לָמָה תִרְצָדוּן הָרִים גְּבֻנָיִם הִתְהַר חֲמַד אֱלֹהִים לְשִׁבְתוֹ אַחַד־יְהוָה יִשְׁפֵן לְנֹצַח: Total, v. 17	16	4	4	4	
	Strophe 8	Total, v. 16-17	4	4	4	
		Total, v. 15-17	4	4	4	
		Total, v. 12-17	12	= 8	+ 4 = 12	+ 0
			20	= 12	+ 8 = 20	+ 0
			26	= 18	+ 8 = 26	+ 0
			51	= 33	+ 18 = 51	+ 0
18	רָכַב אֱלֹהִים רִבְתִּים אֶלְפֵי שָׁנָאן אֲדֹנָי בָּם סִינֵי בִקְדָשׁ: Total, v. 18	17	5	5	5	
			4	4	4	
			9	= 5	+ 4 = 9	+ 0
19	Middle colon עֲלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שְׁבִיתָ שְׁבִי The 7 middle words: לְקַחַת מִתְנֹת בְּאָדָם Meaningful centre יְהִי אֱלֹהִים on word level: 303=148+7+148	18	4	4	4	4
	Middle strophe: Strophe 9	Total, v. 18-19	3	3	3	3
	17 = 8 + 1 + 8	Canticle I.2.2	5	5	5	5
	Sub-canto I.2	Total, v. 12-19	12	= 7	+ 5 = 0	+ 12
	Canto I	Total, v. 2-19	21	= 12	+ 9 = 9	+ 12
			41	= 24	+ 17 = 29	+ 12
			72	= 45	+ 27 = 60	+ 12
			160	= 105	+ 55 = 111	+ 49
20	Vs. 19-20 Mid. verselines: בְּרוּךְ אֲדֹנָי יוֹם יוֹם 36 = 17 + 2 + 17 יַעֲמֹס־לָנוּ הָאֵל יִשׁוּעַתָּנוּ סֵלָה Total, v. 20	19	4	4	4	
			4	4	4	
			8	= 8	+ 0 = 8	+ 0
21	* הָאֵל לָנוּ אֵל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת וְלִיהוָה אֲדֹנָי לְמִנּוֹת תּוֹצְאוֹת: Total, v. 21	20	4	4	4	
			4	2	2	4
			8	= 6	+ 2 = 8	+ 0
			16	= 14	+ 2 = 16	+ 0
22	* אַחַד־אֱלֹהִים יִמְחֵץ רֹאשׁ אֲבִיּוֹ קִדְקֹד שְׁעָרָא מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּאֲשָׁמָיו: Total, v. 22	21	5	5	5	
			4	2	2	4
			9	= 7	+ 2 = 9	+ 0
23	The 13 words attributed to God אָמַר אֲדֹנָי מִפֶּשֶׁן אָשִׁיבָא אָשִׁיב מִמְצֻלוֹת יָם : Total, v. 23	22	4	4	4	
			3	3	3	
			7	= 4	+ 3 = 7	+ 0
24	* לְמַעַן תִּמְחֵץ רִגְלֶךָ בְּדָם לְשׁוֹן כְּלִבְיָדָא מְאִיבִים מִגְּהֹו: Total, v. 24	23	4	4	4	
			4	2	2	4
			8	= 6	+ 2 = 8	+ 0
			24	= 17	+ 7 = 24	+ 0
			40	= 31	+ 9 = 40	+ 0
			200	= 136	+ 64 = 151	+ 49
25	רְאוּ תְּלִיכוֹתֶיךָ אֱלֹהִים תְּלִיכוֹת אֱלֵי מְלָכֵי בִקְדָשׁ: Total, v. 25	24	3	3	3	3
			4	4	4	4
			7	= 3	+ 4 = 4	+ 3
26	קִדְמוֹ שָׂרִים אַחַר נְנָיִם בְּתוֹךְ עֲלָמוֹת תּוֹפְפוֹת: Total, v. 26	25	4	4	4	
			3	3	3	
			7	= 4	+ 3 = 7	+ 0
			14	= 7	+ 7 = 7	+ 7
27	בְּמִקְהֵלוֹת בָּרְכוּ אֱלֹהִים יְהִתָּה מִמְקוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל: Total, v. 27	26	3	3	3	
			3	3	3	
			6	= 3	+ 3 = 6	+ 0

28	שֵׁם בְּנִימֵן צָעִיר רָדִם	27	4	4	4	
	שְׂרֵי יְהוּדָה רְגֻמְתָּם		3	3	3	
	שְׂרֵי זְבֻלֹן שְׂרֵי נַפְתָּלִי:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 28		<u>11 = 7 + 4 = 11 + 0</u>			
	Strophe 13 Total, v. 27-28		<u>17 = 10 + 7 = 17 + 0</u>			
	Canticle II.1.2 Total, v. 25-28		<u>31 = 17 + 14 = 24 + 7</u>			
	Sub-canto II.1 Total, v. 20-28		<u>71 = 48 + 23 = 64 + 7</u>			
	Total, v. 2-28		231 = 153 + 78 = 175 + 56			
29	צִוְהָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֲזֹד	28	3	3	3	
*	עֲזֹדָה אֱלֹהִים [^] זוּ פְּעֻלַת לָנוּ:		5	2	3	5
	Total, v. 29		<u>8 = 5 + 3 = 3 + 5</u>			
30	מִהִיבְלָהָ עַל-יְרֻשָׁתָם	29	3	3	3	
	לָהּ יוֹבִילוּ מְלָכִים שִׁי:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 30		<u>7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7</u>			
	Strophe 14 Total, v. 29-30		15 = 8 + 7 = 3 + 12			
31	גָּעַר חַיִּת קָנָה	30	3	3	3	
	עֲדַת אַבִּירִים בְּעִנְלֵי עַמִּים		4	4	4	
	מִתְרַפֵּס בְּרִצֵּי-כֶסֶף [^]	31	3	3	3	
	בְּזֶר עַמִּים קָרְבוֹת יִחַפְּצוּ:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 31		14 = 10 + 4 = 0 + 14			
32	יֵאָתִיו חֲשַׁמְנִים מִנֵּי מִצְרַיִם [^]	32	4	4	4	
	כּוֹשׁ תְּרִיץ יָדָיו לְאֱלֹהִים:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 32		<u>8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0</u>			
	Strophe 15 Total, v. 31-32		<u>22 = 14 + 8 = 8 + 14</u>			
	Canticle II.2.1 Total, v. 29-32		<u>37 = 22 + 15 = 11 + 26</u>			
	Total, v. 25-32		68 = 39 + 29 = 35 + 33			
33	מִמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ שִׁירוּ לְאֱלֹהִים [^]	33	4	4	4	
	זִמְרוּ אֲדָנֵי סֶלָה:		2	2	2	
	Total, v. 33		6 = 4 + 2 = 6 + 0			
34	לְרֹכֵב בְּשִׁמֵי שָׁמַי-קָדָם [^]	34	4	4	4	
	הֵן יִתֵּן בְּקוֹלוֹ קוֹל עֹז:		5	5	5	
	Total, v. 34		<u>9 = 4 + 5 = 9 + 0</u>			
	Strophe 16 Total, v. 33-34		15 = 8 + 7 = 15 + 0			
	Total, v. 29-34		52 = 30 + 22 = 26 + 26			
35	תָּנוּ עֹז לְאֱלֹהִים	35	3	3	3	
	עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּאֻנְתוֹ וְעֹז בְּשִׁחָקִים:		5	3	2	5
	Total, v. 35		8 = 6 + 2 = 8 + 0			
36	נִזְרָא אֱלֹהִים מִמְקַדְשֵׁךָ	36	3	3	3	
	אֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא נֹתֵן עֹז וְתַעֲצָמוֹת לָעָם		7	7	7	
36c	Coda בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהִים:		2	2	2	
	Total, v. 36		<u>12 = 12 + 0 = 9 + 3</u>			
	Strophe 17 Total, v. 35-36		<u>20 = 18 + 2 = 17 + 3</u>			
	Canticle II.2.2 Total, v. 33-36		<u>35 = 26 + 9 = 32 + 3</u>			
	Sub-canto II.2 Total, v. 29-36		<u>72 = 48 + 24 = 43 + 29</u>			
	Canto II Total, v. 20-36		<u>143 = 96 + 47 = 107 + 36</u>			
	Total, v. 2-36		303 = 201 + 102 = 218 + 85			
	With the heading and סֶלָה (3x), v. 1-36		310 = 205 + 105			

* The unusual positioning of the *atnach* in vs. 21, 22 and 24 was probably to achieve the significant compositional formulae in vs. 2-24 and 2-28. The *atnachs* in vs. 29 and 35 were positioned to have **102** (6 x 17) words after *atnach* in the entire psalm, vs. 2-36.

Observations

1. In terms of the 303 words of the poem the arithmetic centre is constituted by the **7** words with **שָׁבִי** at the centre, in v. 19a.b (303 = 148 + 7 + 148):

עֲלִיתָ לְמָרוֹם שָׁבִיתָ שָׁבִי // לָקַחְתָּ מִתְּנוּת בְּאָדָם

You went up the high mount, you took captives, you received gifts from men.

The pivotal position of these **7** words is underscored by the fact that they partly coincide with the pivotal colon, v. 19a (81 = 40 + 1 + 40). This statement may therefore be regarded as the consciously devised meaningful centre on word level. It concerns a crucial moment in the triumphal song celebrating YHWH's victory over Israel's enemies, which is clearly articulated in the first and last verse. The meaningful centre also stands out by the fact that it forms part of the significant 2nd person passage (v. 19) within a 3rd person context.

The meaningful centre falls within the middle strophe, vs. 18-19 (17 = 8 + 1 + 8), which coincides with the two middle verselines (36 = 17 + 2 + 17). The *selah* at the end of the middle strophe (after v. 20), may have the same attention drawing function as in Psalms 55, 57, 61 and 67. Compare Observation 1 in my Analysis of [Psalm 67](#). The *selah* focuses especially on the second of the two central verselines, v. 20, which expresses the idea of salvation for Israel as a result of YHWH's victory:

בְּרִיךְ אֲדֹנָי יוֹם יוֹם יְעֲמֹס-לָנוּ הָאֱלֹהִים יִשְׁעֵתָנוּ

Blessed is the Lord day by day; he carries us, God our salvation.

The fact that the call to *bless* God is repeated in the coda, v. 36c, highlights this particular verseline in a special way.

2. In terms of verselines, the poem divides into two equal parts (convincingly argued by Van der Lugt in his forthcoming book), two cantos of 18 verselines each:

Canto I, vs. 2-19 18 verselines

Canto II, vs. 20-36 18 verselines.

The fact that the number 18 features also in the number of words in Strophes 1, 2, 3 and 6, and in the 72 (4 x 18) words in Strophes 14-17 (Sub-canto II.2), may suggest that it has a deliberately designed structuring function. However, since the number 18 has no specific numerical significance, this may simply be a matter of chance.

3. There are exactly **85** (5 x 17) words explicitly addressed to God (Column d):

3 words in v. 3

34 words in vs. 8-11

12 words in v. 19

7 words in v. 25

26 words in vs. 29b-31 and

3 words in v. 36a.

This is a clear indication that the 2nd person form of address has been used in a consciously designed and purposeful way to give structure to the text and to weave extra divine name numbers into the text. Compare Psalms 58-60, 62, 63 and 69!

The word-count also reveals that the words attributed to God (vs. 23b-24) amount to **13**, the numerical value of **אחד**, 'one', signifying his uniqueness.

4. The divine name numbers feature in the following way in the text:

vs. 2-7	51 (3 x 17) words spoken about God
vs. 8-11	34 (2 x 17) words addressed to God
vs. 15-17	26 words in total
vs. 12-17	51 (3 x 17) words in total
vs. 16-19	17 words after atnach
vs. 22-24	17 words before atnach
vs. 2-24	136 (8 x 17) words before atnach
vs. 27-28	17 words in total
vs. 25-28	17 words before atnach
vs. 2-28	153 (9 x 17) words before atnach
vs. 2-28	78 (3 x 26) words after atnach
vs. 25-32	68 (4 x 17) words in total
vs. 29-34	52 (2 x 26) words: 26 spoken about, and 26 spoken to God
vs. 35-36	17 words spoken about God
vs. 33-36	26 words before atnach
vs. 2-36	102 (6 x 17) words after atnach
vs. 2-36	85 (5 x 17) words in total addressed to God .

5. If we include the 4-word heading and the 3 occurrences of *selah* in the word count, the total number of words is 310. The 4 words of v. 19a are now at the centre of the text, flanked by **153** words on either side: **153 + 4 + 153** (9 x **17** and the summation of 1-17). This shows that the heading and the *selahs* have been purposefully designed. Compare Observation 6 in my Analysis of [Psalm 67](#).

6. It is intriguing to note that there are no less than **43** references to God by means of six different designations: אֱלֹהִים appears **26x** and the other designations altogether **17x**, namely: אֵל (5x), אֱלֹהֵי (6x), יְהוָה (3x), יְהִי (2x), and שְׁדַי (1x).

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