Psalm 117— Logotechnical Analysis

Guidelines

- Please read the General Introduction as well as the Introduction to Book I and Book V.
- For common features found in the numerical analysis charts, see the Key to the charts.

Specific features of Psalm 117

- The shortest psalm in the Psalter clearly functions as a coda to the First Group of Eleven Psalms in Book V (107-117).
- The psalm has 1 strophe consisting of 2 verselines (with 2 cola each), which bring the total number of verselines in the eleven psalms (107-117) up to exactly **170** (10 x **17**). This may explain the fact that it is so short.

Logotechnical analysis

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

			Total	a	b	c	d
1	הַלְלוּ אֶת־יְהוָה כָּל־גּוֹיִם	1	5	5		5	0
Middle word: 15 = 7 + **1** + 7	שַׁבְּחוּהוּ כָּל־הָאֻמִּים׃		3		3	3	0
	Total, v. 1		8	= 5	+ 3	= 8	+ 0
2	כִּי גָבַר עָלֵינוּ חַסְדּוֹ	2	4	4			4
	וֶאֱמֶת־יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם הַלְלוּ־יָהּ׃		3	3			3
	Total, v. 2		7	= 7	+ 0	= 0	+ 7
	Total, v. 1-2		15	= 12	+ 3	= 8	+ 7
Including הַלְלוּ־יָהּ, total, v. 1-2			**17**	= 14	+ 3	= 8	+ 9

Observations

1. In terms of the 15 words of the psalm, the middle word is הָאֻמִּים, 'peoples', with 7 words on either side: **7 + 1 + 7**. The text has obviously been designed to have precisely this word at the centre, therefore, there is no need for seeking a larger centre. The psalm clearly reiterates the theme of the meaningful centre of Psalm 115 (115:9-11), in which *Israel* is called on *to trust* in YHWH; here, the *foreign nations* are called on *to praise* him. There, the *motivation for trusting in him* was that YHWH is 'their help and their shield'; here, the the author motivates the *call to praise him* by referring to YHWH's strong love: 'for strong is his steadfast love and faithfulness.'

2. That is why Psalm 117 can be identified as a coda to the preceding psalms. One of the characteristics of a coda is that it reiterates the leading theme and draws a general conclusion. See the General Introduction, "The use of a coda as a device for conclusion." In fact, Psalm 117 concludes the First Group of Eleven Psalms in Book V (107-117), the great majority of which have themselves a coda at the end. Please consult the Introduction to Book V, p. 3.

3. The name יהוה occurs 2x, bringing the occurrences in Psalms 116-117 to **17**.