

The Numerical Features of the Book of Exodus

A New Approach to its Compositional Structure

Conclusions and a Review of the Results

At the completion of the logotechnical analysis of the book, it is appropriate to briefly assess the evidence gleaned from the results. First and foremost, the analysis has established once and for all that the book is from beginning to end, from the first to the last verse, a numerical composition, and that it is governed by the number of fullness, **7**, and especially by the two divine name numbers **17** and **26**. Typically, the first **7** verses of Chapter 1 are made up of **51** (3×17) words, and the last three verses of Chapter 40 are made up of **34** (2×17) words. There are numerous other instances of final verses of sections and subsections with a number of words that are a multiple of one of the divine name numbers. This is undeniable evidence of the use of the numbers **17** and **26** as a literary device for finalizing and sealing a given text.

The Book of Exodus can be regarded as a textbook example of the way they are woven into the fabric of the text to express symbolically the presence of God in the events described in the text.

Having computed the number of *verses* and *words* governed by **17** and **26** I found the following:

Part I	Ex 1,1-15,21	352 of the 409 verses (86%) and 4886 of the 5956 words (82%).
Part II	Ex 15,22-18,27	All 85 (5×17) verses (100%) and all 1309 (77×17) words (100%).
Part III	Ex 19,1-20,26	45 of the 51 verses (88%) and 601 of the 687 words (87%).
Part IV	Ex 21,1-24,18	All 118 verses (100%) and all 1462 (86×17) words (100%).
Part V	Ex 25,1-31,18	139 of the 243 verses (57%) and 1774 of the 3123 words (57%).
Part VI	Ex 32,1-34,35	63 of the 93 verses (67%) and 946 of the 1436 words (65%).
Part VII	Ex 35,1-40,38	88 of the 214 verses (41%) and 1155 of the 2740 words (42%).
Parts I-VII	Grand Total	890 of the 1213 verses (73%) and 12133 of the 16697 words (73%).

The divine name numbers and their multiples are to be found in single verses, groups of verses, paragraphs, smaller or larger subsections, chapters, the larger component parts, in the book as a whole, as well as in different categories of the text, such as narrative sections and speeches, and in the incidents of the name YHWH. This substantiates the Jewish tradition that the name of God is woven into the texture of the Torah as in a piece of textile.

The word-count of the book as a whole has brought the general framework to light, which is clearly governed by the divine name number **17** in the following way:

1,1-22 The Israelites oppressed by Pharaoh **240** (20×12) words
2,1-40,38 From Moses' birth to the erection of the Tabernacle **16473** ($57 \times 17 \times 17$) words
3,1-40,38 From YHWH's appearance to the erection of the Tabernacle **16133** (949×17) words.
 The final chapter is rounded off, finalized and sealed by **60** ($26 + 34$) words in 40,34-38.

The first chapter has the status and function of a prologue sketching the scene, and although it seems to stand apart from a numerical point of view, it is really part and parcel of 'The Prelude to the Exodus-story', 1,1-4,31, which is like the rest of the book governed by the number **17**:
1,1-4,31 The Prelude to the Exodus-story has **1428** (84×17) words and **5467** (497×11) letters.
 To crown it all, the Prelude is rounded off, finalized and sealed by **52** (2×26) words in 4,28-31.

This speaks volumes for the meticulous way in which the author/editor of the book has composed his text, not only on word level but also on letter level. It also explains why the transmitters of the text of the Hebrew Bible meticulously counted words and letters: namely to guarantee that its numerical features are maintained and safeguarded.

And last but not least, it provides irrefutable evidence for the reliability of the Masoretic text in Codex L. Therefore, biblical scholars should realize that they must exercise utmost restraint with regard to emendations.

Apart from their symbolic function of imbuing the text with the idea of YHWH's presence through his name, the two divine name numbers also function as compositional devices for giving structure to the texts and to delimit and finalize them as literary entities.

It turns out that the book divides into **7** main parts of which the delimitations were established with a great measure of reliability, if not with absolute certainty.

Here is a comprehensive review of the results pertaining to the compositional structure of the book and its numerical features: its general framework and its subdivisions.

The General Framework in 7 Parts

Text	Words	Finalizing Words	YHWH's Speeches	יה / יהוה
Part I 1,1-15,21	5956	26	176+1770 =1946	196+
Part II 15,22-18,27	1309 (77x17)	68 (4x17)	29 + 153 = 182	42=238 (14x17)
Part III 19,1-20,26	687	10	32+404=436	27+
Part IV 21,1-24,18	1462 (86x17)	68 (4x17)	7+1249=1256	16=43
Part V 25,1-31,18*	3123 (3107+16)*	26+68 (4x17)	34+3073 =3107	40
Part VI 32,1-34,35	1436	48	39+550=589	37
Part VII 35,1-40,38	2740	60 (26+34)	5+158=163	42
The book as a whole	16713	60 (26+34)	322+7357 =7679	400=398+2YH

* Part V really ends at 31,17, where it is finalized by **26+68** words, v. 18 (16 words) being an epilogue.

Remark 1 The use of the two divine name numbers is self-evident. Most striking is the significant number of finalizing words in no less than five of the seven parts. The lack of such finalizing words at the end of Part III can easily be explained as inappropriate, because YHWH's speech in 20,22-26 does not really end at 20,26 but continues in 21,1 with the Covenant Laws. Why Part VI is not finalized by a multiple of **17** or **26** can be explained in exactly the same way, because the narrative in 34,33-35 continues in 35,1 with the words introducing Moses' speech.

Remark 2 Since the boundaries of both Part II and Part IV are definitely established in two ways, first, by their total number of words which are multiples of **17**, and second, by being rounded off and finalized by **68 (4x17)** words, this has consequences for the boundaries of Part I and III, and for the initial boundary of Part V. However, the outer boundary of Part V is firmly established by the fact that it is rounded off and finalized by **26+68** words. It is only the boundary between Part VI and VII that has to be determined. And that is no problem at all seeing their contents. The conclusion to be drawn is that the present heptad structured framework of the book is not only plausible, but essentially correct.

Remark 3 Parts I and II are inextricably linked together by **YHWH's speeches** and **his name**:
the words devoted to **YHWH's speeches** are a multiple of **7**: $1946 + 182 = 2128 (304x7)$,
the number of occurrences of **the divine name** are a multiple of **17**: $196 + 42 = 238 (14x17)$.

Remark 4 Parts III and IV are inextricably linked together by the number of occurrences of **the divine name** which are the sum of **17** and **26**: $27+16 = 43$.

Remark 5 Parts V-VII are inextricably linked together in the same way as I and II:
the words devoted to **YHWH's speeches** are a multiple of **17**: $3107+589+163=3859 (227x17)$,
the number of occurrences of **the divine name** are a multiple of **17**: $40+37+42=119 (7x17)$.
This is additional, irrefutable evidence in support of the present heptad structured framework.

The reader can check these facts by consulting the detailed logotechnical analyses and the explanatory Observations.

The 7 Subsections of Part I Exod 1,1-15,21

	Words	Letters	Endings
Section 1 Ex 1,1–4,31 The Prelude to the Exodus-story	1428 (84x17)	5467 (497x11)	52 (2x26)
§ 1 Ex 1,1-22 The Israelites Oppressed by Pharaoh	240	957 (87x11)	13
§ 2 Ex 2,1-25 The Birth of Moses and His Flight to Midian	340 (20x17)	1294	40
§ 3 Ex 3,1-22 YHWH Reveals his Name to Moses and Commissions Him	395	1535	58
§ 4 Ex 4,1-17 YHWH Takes Steps to Enhance Moses' Credibility	255 (15x17)	941	10
§ 5 Ex 4,18-31 Moses Returns to Egypt to Perform his Task	198	740	52 (2x26)
Section 2 Ex 5,1-6,13 The Failed Action to Persuade Pharaoh	510 (30x17)	1972 (116x17)	20
Section 3 Ex 6,14-28 The Levitical Descent of Moses and Aaron	182 (7x26)	731 (43x17)	8
Section 4 Ex 6,29-7,13 YHWH's Resolve to Use Force Against Egypt	202	764	51 (3x17)
Section 5 Ex 7,14-9,35 YHWH Speaks 10x Sending 7 Plagues	1189	4532	17+26
§ 1 Ex 7,14-9,7 YHWH speaks 7x Sending 5 Plagues	765 (45x17)	2954	26+16
§ 2 Ex 9,8-35 YHWH speaks 3x Sending 2 Plagues	424	1587	17+26
Section 6 Ex 10,1-12,51 Seven Divine Speeches, 3 Plagues, and the Passover	1422	5268	34+26
§ 1 Ex 10,1-11,10 YHWH Speaks 5x Sending 2 Plagues	671 (61x11)	2432	20
§ 2 Ex 12,1-28 One Divine Speech and the Institution of the Passover	442 (17x26)	1694	51 (3x17)
§ 3 Ex 12,29-42 The Execution of the Tenth Plague and Israel's Departure	206	789	17+16
§ 4 Ex 12,43-51 One Divine Speech and the Statute of the Passover	103	353	34+26
Section 7 Ex 13,1-15,21 The Exodus and the Crossing of the Reed Sea	1023 (93x11)	3965	26
§ 1 Ex 13,1-16 The Dedication of the First-born	233	881	17+42
§ 2 Ex 13,17-22 The Journey from Egypt to the Reed Sea	92	356	68 (4x17)
§ 3 14,1-31 The Crossing of the Reed Sea	474	1853	17
§ 4 Ex 15,1-21 The Song Sung at the Reed Sea and its Epilogue.	224	875	26
Total Part I Exod 1,1-15,21	5956	22699	26

No explanation needed: the numbers are self-evident.

The 7 Subsections of Part II Exod 15,22-18,27

	Words	Letters	Endings
§1 Exod 15,22-26 In the Wilderness of Shur: Marah and Elim	84	307	52 (2x26)
§2 Exod 15,27-16,10 In the Wilderness of Sin: the Israelites Complain	202	760	17+16
§3 Exod 16,11-27 In the Wilderness of Sin: the Quails and the Manna	231 (33x7)	877	70 (10x7)
§4 Exod 16,28-36 In the Wilderness of Sin: the Manna and the Sabbath	128+	482	52+25=77
§5 Exod 17,1-7 In the Wilderness of Sin: Massah and Meribah	127= 255 (15x17)	465	52+19
§6 Exod 17,8-16 In the Wilderness of Sin: Israel Attacked by Amalek	119 (7x17)	449	26+11
§7 Exod 18,1-27 In the Wilderness of Sinai: the Meeting with Jethro	418 (38x11)	1510	68 (4x17)
Total Part II Exod 15,22-18,27	1309 (77x17)	4850	68 (4x17)

No explanation needed: the numbers are self-evident.

The 7 Subsections of Part III Exod 19,1-20,26

	Words	Letters	Endings
§1 19,1-6 Moses commissioned by YHWH as mediator	85 (5x17)+	334	17+14
§2 19,7-17 The Israelites prepare to meet God on Mount Sinai	175= 260	628	11
§3 19,18-25 The visible manifestation of YHWH in fire and thunder	115	409	6
§4 20,1-7 YHWH promulgates the Decalogue: the first 3 commandments	83+	305	17
§5 20,8-17 The 7 remaining commandments, to begin with the Sabbath	96+	343	26+15
§6 20,18-21 Moses recognized by the people as mediator	60+	229	10
§7 20,22-26 The law of the Altar.	73=312(12x26)	266	10
Total Part III Exod 19,1-20,26	687	2514	10

Note that the preparations for the theophany have **260 (10x26)** words, and that the Decalogue chapter is made up of **26** verses and **312 (12x26)** words.

The 12 Subsections of Part IV Exod 21,1-24,18

			Words	Letters	Endings
§1	Exod 21,1-11	Laws Regulating Slavery	127	461	68 (4x17)
§2	Exod 21,12-27	About Capital Offences	171	607	26
§3	Exod 21,28-22,3	About Bodily Injuries	188	641	26
			168	566	52 (2x26)
§4	Exod 22,4-14	Protection of Property	26	93	26
§5	Exod 22,15-17	About Seduction and Witchcraft	92	329	17
§6	Exod 22,18-26	Miscellaneous Laws	52 (2x26)	182 (7x26)	52 (2x26)
§7	Exod 22,27-23,1	About Reviling God or the Ruler	66	233	26
§8	Exod 23,2-8	About Conduct in Legal Cases	140	533	34 (2x17)
§9	Exod 23,9-19	Obligations Ensuing From the Exodus	180	701	39 (=26+13)
§10	Exod 23,20-33	Paranetic Epilogue	156 (6x26)	606	51 (3x17)
§11	Exod 24,1-11	The Ratification of the Covenant	96	360	68 (4x17)
§12	Exod 24,12-18	YHWH Invites Moses to meet him	1462 (86x17)	5312	---
Total Part IV Exod 21,1-24,18					

No explanation needed: the numbers are self-evident.

The 26 Paragraphs of Part V Exod 25,1-31,18

			Words	Endings
§ 1	25,1-9	Preparatory Measures	74	14 (2x7)
§ 2	25,10-22	Directions for the Ark	168	22
§ 3	25,23-30	Directions for the Table	84	7
§ 4	25,31-40	Directions for the Lampstand	114	7
§ 5	26,1-6	Directions for the Tabernacle	92	14 (2x7)
§ 6	26,7-14	The Hangings	109	26
§ 7	26,15-30	The Frames as Uprights	179	7
§ 8	26,31-37	The Veil	100	85 (5x17)+15
§ 9	27,1-8	Directions for the Altar	96	52 (2x26)
§ 10	27,9-19	Directions for the Court	129	11
§ 11	27,20-21	Obligations Regarding the Lamp	37	22
§ 12	28,1-5	Directions for the Priestly Clothing	77	13
§ 13	28,6-12	The Ephod	97	52 (2x26)
§ 14	28,13-14	The Settings and the Chains	18	15
§ 15	28,15-30	The Breastpiece of Judgement	221 (13x17)	17+26
§ 16	28,31-35	The Mantle of the Ephod	61	14 (2x7)
§ 17	28,36-43	The Medallion	121	52 (2x26)
§ 18	29,1-37	Directions for Ordaining the Priests	543	17+26+15
§ 19	29,38-46	The Offers	106	26+15
§ 20	30,1-10	Directions for the Incense Altar	131	18
§ 21	30,11-16	Directions for the Sanctuary Tax	90	85 (5x17)
§ 22	30,17-21	Directions for the Bronze Basin	57	52 (2x26)
§ 23	30,22-33	Directions for the Anointing Oil	129	26+11
§ 24	30,34-38	Directions for Making Incense	61	8
§ 25	31,1-11	Directions for the Craftsmen	119 (7x17)	78 (3x26)+11
§ 26	31,12-17	A Reminder Regarding the Sabbath	94	68 (4x17)
Total Part V Exod 25,1-31,17			3107	68 (4x17)
31,18 is the Epilogue 16 words			3123	---

No explanation needed: the numbers are self-evident.

The Compositional Structure of Part VI Exod 32,1-34,35

	Words	Letters	Endings
Section 1 <u>32,1-35</u>	544 (32x17)	2032	40
Section 2 <u>33,1-23</u>	354	1286	39
Section 3 <u>34,1-35</u>	538	1976 (76x26)	42
Total <u>32,1-34,35</u>	1436	5294	

In terms of words, it is only Chapter 32 that has a significant number of words governed by one of the divine name numbers. In 33 and 34 the author/editor has only focussed on certain sections of the text to highlight them by means of the divine name numbers.

The Compositional Structure of Part VII Exod 35,1-40,38

	Words	Endings
§1 Exod 35,1-3 Moses speaks about the keeping of the Sabbath P	40	17+7
§2 Exod 35,4-29 Moses speaks about the Contributions and their effect P	330	21 (3x7)
§3 Exod 35,30-36,7 Moses speaks about the Craftsmen and their work S	195	17+8
§4 Exod 36,8-13 The Craftsmen make the Tabernacle S	97	34(2x17)+14(2x7)
§5 Exod 36,14-19 The Craftsmen make the Curtains S	70	34(2x17)+10
§6 Exod 36,20-38 The Craftsmen make the Upright Frames and the Veil P	222	52 (2x26)
§7 Exod 37,1-9 The Craftsmen make the Ark P	113	52 (2x26)+18
§8 Exod 37,10-16 The Craftsmen make the Table P	84	19
§9 Exod 37,17-24 The Craftsmen make the Lampstand P	100	17+8
§10 Exod 37,25-29 The Craftsmen make the Altar of Incense and the Oil P	69	34(2x17)+19
§11 Exod 38,1-8 The Craftsmen make the Altar of Whole-offering S	102 (6x17)	14(2x7)
§12 Exod 38,9-20 The Craftsmen make the Court S	136 (8x17)	17
§13 Exod 38,21-39,1 Things for the Tabernacle and its Costs P	195	17+21(3x7)
§14 Exod 39,2-7 The Craftsmen make the Ephod and its Shoulder-pieces P	83	14(2x7)
§15 Exod 39,8-26 The Craftsmen make the Breastpiece and the Mantle S	236	14(2x7)
§16 Exod 39,27-32 The Craftsmen make the Tunics and the Medallion P	79	17
§17 Exod 39,33-43 They bring the Tabernacle and its Furnishings to Moses P	149	16
§18 Exod 40,1-16 YHWH orders Moses to carry out his instructions S	172	42(6x7)
§19 Exod 40,17-33 Moses erects the Tabernacle and furnishes it P	208 (8x26)	34(2x17)+15
§20 Exod 40,34-38 YHWH occupies the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle P	60 (26+ 34)	34(2x17)

Paragraphs 11 and 12 as well as 19 and 20 are specifically highlighted by their number of words. With regard to the endings, the author/editor has applied the same technique as in the **26** paragraphs of the first Tabernacle passage, Part V Exod 25,1-31,18.