

The Numerical Features of the Book of Genesis

A New Approach to its Compositional Structure

Conclusions and a Review of the Results

The first book of the Torah is the prototype of a numerical composition which sets the tone for the other books. The logotechnical analysis has brought to light that it is from beginning to end a well-constructed masterpiece of numerical architecture, throughout governed by the two divine name numbers **17** and **26**. Genesis is made up of altogether **1534** (59x26) Masoretic verses, which is the first indication that the book is governed by the number **26**. However, once again in terms of verses, I discovered that from the Toledoth of Terah onwards (25,12-50,26) the book has **1241** verses, which is a multiple of the other divine name number, **17** (73x17). Finally, the fact that the Prologue to the 11 Toledoths (1,1-2,3) is made up of **34** (2x17) verses, is also indicative of the way the book is governed by the number **17**.

The Creation narrative of the Prologue clearly stands apart from the 11 Toledoths not only in terms of content, but also by the fact that God is designated here as Elohim in contradistinction to the use of YHWH Elohim (20x) in the Toledoth of the World (2,4-3,24) and the use of YHWH and Elohim in the rest of the book. Moreover, the Prologue is clearly delimited by a **Petuchah** after 2,3.

The following statistics give us an idea of the extent to which **17** and **26** are woven into the text of Genesis:

In the **Prologue**, Gen 1,1-2,3, it is 28 of the **34** verses (**82%**) and 409 of the 469 words (**87%**).

In **Part I**, Gen 2,4-4,26, it is 57 of the 72 verses (**79%**) and 774 of the 981 words (**79%**).

In **Part II**, Gen 5,1-6,8, it is 19 of the 40 verses (**48%**) and 250 of the 481 words (**60%**).

In **Part III**, Gen 6,9-11,26, it is 107 of the 147 verses (**73%**) and 1246 of the 1772 words (**70%**).

In **Part IV**, Gen 11,27-25,11, it is 283 of the 377 verses (**75%**) and 4925 of the 5189 words (**94%**).

In **Part V**, Gen 25,12-35,29, it is 264 of the 372 verses (**71%**) and 3569 of the 5016 words (**71%**).

In **Part VI**, Gen 36,1-37,1, it is 33 of the 44 verses (**75%**) and **494** of the **494** words (**100%**).

In **Part VII**, Gen 37,2-50,26, it is 306 of the 448 verses (**68%**) and 4615 of the 6211 words (**74%**).

Genesis 1-50, Average: **71%** of the verses and **79%** of the words are governed by **17** and **26**.

Since it is not always possible to distinguish random occurrences of **17** and **26** from instances due to conscious choice or deliberate design, the percentages may all be somewhat lower. However, this may never be a reason for regarding every instance as due to coincidence.

Genesis is rounded off and sealed, if you will, 'canonized', by a number of verses that are a multiple of **26**, namely, **1534** (59x26), that is to say according to the Masoretic count noted at the end of the book.

The computer-assisted count registered 1533 verses, one verse short of the Masoretic count. This can only be explained by assuming that the Masoretes deliberately created an extra verse, which they achieved by means of a **Petuchah** after 'atnach in the middle of 35,22, splitting it into 22a and 22b.

This division (for good reasons!) is not only logical but even perfectly in accordance with the contents:

: ויהי בשכן ישראל בארץ ההוא וילך ראובן וישכב את־בלהה פילגש אביו וישמע ישראל פ ויהיו בני־יעקב שנים עשר:

For parallels, compare the **Setumahs** within a verse in Deut 2,8; 5,21, and 23,8.

Overview of the Numerical Features of the Eleven Toledoths:

As the follow-up of the Prologue, the eleven Toledoths fundamentally determine the structure of the book. They are interwoven with the narratives but in such a way that they are easily discernible on the basis of the introductory headings.

Title	Texts	Verses	Words	Letters
Prologue to the <i>Toledoth</i>	Gen 1,1-2,3	34 (2x17)	469	1815
I Toledoth of the World	Gen 2,4-4,26	72	981	3607
II Toledoth of Adam	Gen 5,1-6,8	40	481	1812
III Toledoth of Noah	Gen 6,9-9,29	89+ 41 = 130 (5x26)	1182	4334
IV Toledoth of Noah's Sons	Gen 10,1-11,9	41	187 (11x17)	1558
V Toledoth of Shem's Sons	Gen 11,10-26	17	182 (7x26)	704
VI Toledoth of Terah (the centre)	Gen 11,27-25,11	377	5189	19518
VII Toledoth of Ishmael	Gen 25,12-18	7	74	307
VIII Toledoth of Isaac	Gen 25,19-35,29	365	4942	18545
IX Toledoth of Esau/Edom	Gen 36,1-8	8	1241(73x17)	380
X Toledoth of Esau/Seir	Gen 36,9-37,1	36	389	1500
XI Toledoth of Jacob	Gen 37,2-50,26	448	6211	23989
Grand Total of the Toledoths	Gen 2,4-50,26	1500	20144	76254
Grand Total in the book of Genesis	Gen 1,1-50,26	1534 (59x26)	20613	78069

I came to the conclusion that, by combining closely related Toledoths (that of Noah, his sons and Shem's sons [III,IV and V], as well as that of Ishmael and Isaac [VII and VIII] and that of Esau/Edom and Esau/Seir [IX and X]) a *sevenfold* structure of the Toledoth is the most plausible and perhaps the best possible division of the text, with the Prologue (1,1-2,3) functioning as an introduction to the Eleven Toledoths, and with The Toledoth of Terah once again in pride of place at the centre:

Prologue, 1,1-2,3

Part I, 2,4-4,26

Part II, 5,1-6,8

Part III, 6,9-11,26

Part IV, 11,27-25,11

Part V, 25,12-35,29

Part VI, 36,1-37,1

Part VII, 37,2-50,26

The Creation of the World

I The Toledoth of the World

II The Toledoth of Adam

III-V The Toledoths of Noah and his Sons

VI The Toledoth of Terah (Abraham's Story)

VII-VIII The Toledoths of Ishmael and Isaac (Abraham's Sons)

IX-X The Toledoths of Esau

XI The Toledoth of Jacob (concluded by an Epilogue: 50,22-26).

The *sevenfold* structure gains probability in light of the fact that both Exodus and Deuteronomy have a *sevenfold* framework.

The Prologue itself divides into 7 paragraphs coinciding with the 7 days of the week. The number 7 returns in the total number of words, 469, which is a multiple of 7 (67x7).

The 11 divine speeches in the Prologue (1,3.6.9.11.14.20.22.24.26.28.29) prelude on the 11 Toledoths.

Part I, Genesis 2,4-4,26 The Toledoth of the World

Most significantly, this passage is made up of **72** verses, which represent the numerical value of the word תולדות: $22+6+12+4+6+22=72$.

In terms of content and on numerical considerations, it divides into four Sections coinciding in this case precisely with the chapter division:

- Section I 2,4-25 The Creation of Human Beings: beginning with **34** words and ending with **104** (4x26),
- Section II 3,1-24 Why God banished Adam and Eve: beginning with **52** (2x26), ending with **51** (3x17),
- Section III 4,1-16 The Story of Cain and Abel: ending with **51** (3x17) words,
- Section IV 4,17-24+25-26 Cain's Descendants + the Birth of Seth: **104** (4x26) + 36 words.

Sections I-II deal with events *inside* the Garden of Eden:

The narrative section at the beginning (2,4-15) is made up of **153** (9x17) words.

The narrative section in 3,6-8 is made up of **52** (2x26) words.

The divine speeches have **34** (2x17) words in the introductions and **156** (6x26) in the speeches.

All speeches taken together have **52** (2x26) words in the introductions.

Divine Speech VIII in 3,17-19 (the punishment assigned to Adam) has exactly **170** (10x17) letters.

The words spoken by the snake: $9+17=26$. The key-word גֶּן, 'the garden', occurs **7x** in 2,4-3,24.

Sections III-IV deal with events *outside* the Garden:

Altogether **78** (3x26) words have been used for the divine speeches (including the introductions) while **153** (9x17) have been used for all speeches taken together (once again including the introductions).

Taken separately, the introductions have **26** words.

Moreover, Speeches IX-XIII have altogether **85** (5x17) words and **286** (11x26) letters.

The key-word אָח, 'brother' (always with a suffix) occurs **7x** in 4,1-16.

Part II, Genesis 5,1-6,8 The Toledoth of Adam

The Toledoth of Adam has a very regular structure, consistently indicated by the layout markers:

- 5,1-2 Heading and Prologue: God created and blessed the human beings
- 5,3-6,4 Ten generations and the lifespans of the progenitors
- 6,5-8 Epilogue: the wickedness of human beings: God's resolve to wipe the human race.

The Toledoth is concluded by the Epilogue (6,5-8) dealing with YHWH's resolve to wipe the human race from the face of the earth because of their wickedness. Moreover, it functions as a cliffhanger anticipating The Toledoth of Noah and the Story of the Flood.

The paragraphs about Seth (5,6-6) and Mahelalel (5,15-17) are highlighted by having **34** (2x17) words each.

Part of the Methuselah paragraph (5,26-27) and part of the Lamech paragraph (5,30-31) have **26** words each.

The paragraph about the 10th Generation (5,32-6,4) is specifically emphasized by **78** (3x26) words.

Finally, the Epilogue (6,5-8) is made up of **52** (2x26) words.

An investigation into the divine speeches in the book until this point (1,1-6,8) has brought to light that there are altogether **26** with in total **78** (3x26) words in the introductions, **156** (6x26) in the speeches of 1,1-3,24, and **78** (3x26) words devoted to the four speeches in 4,1-26 (including the introductions).

Overview of the numerical features of the 26 divine speeches in Gen 1,1-6,8:

The Texts	Speeches	DSF	DS	Total words	Letters
The Prologue (1,1-2,3)	11	28	166	194	620
Part I, Sections I-II (2,4-3,24)	9	34 (2x17)	156 (6x26)	190	563
Part I, Section III (4,1-26)	4	12	66	78 (3x26)	221(13x17)
Part II (5,1-6,8)	2	4	33	37	117(9x13)
Genesis 1,1-6,8	26	78 (3x26)	421	499	1521(39x39)

Part III, Genesis 6,9-11,26 The Toledoths of Noah and his Sons

Part III, Gen 6,9-11,26, comprises three Toledoths, which must be regarded as three distinct, closely connected, literary entities:

The Toledoth of Noah (Section 1), Gen 6,9-9,29,

The Toledoth of the Sons of Noah and their Dispersion at Babel (Section 2), Gen 10,1-11,9,

The Toledoth of Shem until the Birth of Abram (Section 3), Gen 11,10-26.

The Toledoth of Noah (including the story of the Flood in 6,13-9,7) divides into **7** paragraphs in accordance with the Masoretic layout markers and in terms of content, with the episode about Noah leaving the ark and God blessing his descendants in pride of place at the centre:

§1 Gen 6,9-12 **S** Prologue: YHWH assesses the corruption in the world: highlighted by **17** words.

§2 Gen 6,13-22 **S** YHWH orders Noah to build an ark and to load it: highlighted by **78** (3x26) words.

§3 Gen 7,1-8:14 **S** The Flood and the annihilation of all living beings on dry land: highlighted by **68** (4x17) words.

§4 Gen 8,15-9:7 **S** **Noah leaves the ark and God blesses him and his descendants:** ... by **102** (6x17) words.

§5 Gen 9,8-17 **P** God establishes a covenant with Noah and his descendants: ... by **52** (2x26) and **34** words.

§6 Gen 9,18-27 A tragic event after the Flood: Noah dishonoured; Canaan cursed: composed of **102** words.

§7 Gen 9,28-29 **P** Epilogue to the Toledoth of Noah.

Worth noting are the following numerical features:

The text consists of 89 verses, with **4** in the prologue, YHWH's assessment of the situation in the corrupt world (6,9-12), and **85** (5x17) in the story of Noah and his sons (6,13-9,29). The Toledoth opens with **44** words in 6,9-12, which represent 2x the numerical value of נח (14+8=22). This number returns in the **22** occurrences of התבה, 'the ark'.

The text is sealed by **17** occurrences of the designation Elohim and **7** instances of the name YHWH. The name **Noah** occurs altogether **34x** (2x17). The number of fullness **7** plays an important role to express the completeness of the event: the text divides into **7 paragraphs**, there are **7 pairs** of ritually clean beasts; **7 days** are mentioned (7,4.10; 8,10.12) and the **7th month** (8,4). In the Flood-story (6,9-9,7) כל־בשר, 'all flesh', occurs **7x** (6,12.13.17.19; 7,16.21; 8,17).

YHWH's command to Noah to build an ark (6,14-21) is made up of **119** (7x17) words.

The passage dealing with the ark and its load floating safely on the waters of the flood, while all living beings on dry land are annihilated (7,17-24), has **105** (15x7) words.

YHWH's first speech (6,13-21), together with the introduction, is made up of **136** (8x17) words, which divides in terms of content into **17** and **119** (7x17) words.

Speech II (7,1-4), including its introduction, has **68** (4x17) words.

The passage in which YHWH specifies the beasts Noah has to take with him (7:2-4) has **52** (2x26) words.

Altogether **204** (4x26) words are devoted to Speeches I and II and their introductions (**136+68=204**).

Speech VI (9,8-11) including its introduction, is made up of **52** (2x26) words.

Noah's curse on Canaan and his benediction regarding Shem and Japhet have **26** words.

The Toledoth of the Sons of Noah and their Dispersion at Babel (Section 2) is inextricably linked to the Toledoth of Noah, as shown by the fact that the two sections have altogether **130** (5x26) verses.

In Section 2, the sons of Japhet are specifically focused on by **26** words, the sons of Cush by **85** (5x17) words, the offspring of Ham/Canaan by **51** (3x17) words, and the sons of Shem by **85** (5x17) words.

Moreover, Shem has **26** descendants (**13** sons of Shem + **13** sons of Joktan), Japhet and Ham have together also **26** sons, while Mizraim and Canaan have altogether **17** descendants.

Most remarkably, the total number of words until this point (1,1-10,32) amount to exactly **3400** (200x17), which is underscored by the **1950** (75x26) words of 5,1-10,32. This is an indication that 10,32 marks a preliminary conclusion during the compositional process.

The passage about the dispersion of Noah's descendants (11,1-9) is made up of **121 (11x11)** words, a multiple of the number of fulfilment, which have consciously been chosen to express the 'fulfilment' of the earth, in other words, the fulfilment of God's command to 'fill the earth' (Gen 1,28).

Most intriguingly, the two words in 11,5, וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה, 'And YHWH came down', are positioned precisely at the mathematical centre of the dispersion-story as such (vs 1-8): **102 = 50 + 2 + 50**. Verse 9 clearly stands apart as an aetiological explanation of the multinational world and the name Babel. The two central words are positioned in pride of place for they express the kernel of YHWH's intervention in human affairs.

The passage about the Toledoth of Shem until the birth of Abram (11,10-26) is composed of **17** verses and **182 (7x26)** words.

To crown it all, the four Toledoths (of Adam, Noah, Noah's sons, and Shem's sons) in 5,1-11,26 are made up of **187 (11x17)** verses.

Part IV, Genesis 11,27-25,11 The Toledoth of Terah

In terms of the Masoretic layout markers, the Toledoth of Terah divides into **17** Paragraphs of disproportionate length, of which **7** are delimited by **P** and **10** by **S**.

The **7** Paragraphs delimited by **P** seem to deal with crucial events in the storyline. In terms of content and numerical considerations, the **17** Paragraphs can be grouped into five Sections:

I, §§1-2: 11,27-12,9 P; II, §§3-8: 12,10-17,27 P;

III, §§9-11: 18,1-21,21 P; IV, §§12-13: 21,22-22,19 P; V, §§14-17: 22,20-25,11 S.

Note that Sections II and III are both made up of **1560 (60x26)** words, and that **918 (54x17)** words are used in the story about the Search of a Wife for Isaac in 14,1-67!

	§1: 11,27-32	Prologue to the Story of Abram	S	89	
I	§2: 12,1-9	Abram's Call and his First Wanderings	P	127	
	§3: 12,10-13,18	Abram's Stay in Egypt and Canaan	P	382	1560= 60x26
	§4: 14,1-24	Abram Among Belligerent Kings	S	342	
II	§5: 15,1-21	YHWH's Covenant with Abram: the Exodus Foretold	S	258	
	§6: 16,1-16	Abram, Sarai, and Hagar	S	223	
	§7: 17,1-14	YHWH's Covenant with Abraham: the Circumcision	S	178	
	§8: 17,15-27	God Promises Abraham a Son	P	177	
	§9: 18,1-19,38	Abraham Meets the Three Men and Lot	S	1000	
III	§10: 20,1-18	Abraham and Sarah at Gerar	S	282	
	§11: 21,1-21	The Birth of Isaac and the Expulsion of Hagar	P	278	
IV	§12: 21,22-34	Abraham and Abimelech at Beer-Sheba	P	158	
	§13: 22,1-19	The Binding of Isaac in Moriah	P	307	
	§14: 22,20-24	Birth of Nahor's 12 Sons and Daughter Rebecca	S	60	
V	§15: 23,1-20	Sarah's Death and Burial	S	275	
	§16: 24,1-67	In Search of a Wife for Isaac	P	918 (54x17)	
	§17: 25,1-11	Abraham's Death and Burial	S	135	

The most salient numerical features of Section II, §§3-8: 12,10-17,27:

12,10-13	why Abram came to reside in Egypt	52 (2x26) words.
13,1-7	how Abram became very rich	85 (5x17) words.
13,8-18	Abram's deal with Lot	156 (6x26) words.
14,1-9	Abram among belligerent kings	136 (8x17) words.
14,13-24	Abram's campaign against the allied kings	170 (10x17) words.
15,1-6	YHWH's initiatives to make a covenant with Abram	85 (5x17) words.

15,13-20 YHWH foresees Israel's stay in Egypt **78** (3x26) words.
 17,7-14 YHWH promises a covenant with him and his offspring **85 + 26** words.
 17,15-21 YHWH's promise that Sarai will be a mother of nations **104** (4x26) words.

There are **17** divine speeches (**4** by YHWH's Angel and **13** by YHWH himself).

In 16,11-12, the Angel speaks **26** words announcing the birth of Ishmael.

In Genesis 15-16, **102** (6x17) words are devoted to the human dialogues (Abram, Sarah, and Hagar) and **153** (9x17) words are devoted to the remaining narrative sections.

In 17,1-14, YHWH's speeches 13, 14, and 15, in which he informs Abraham about the covenantal stipulations, is made up of altogether **153** (9x17) words.

In 17,19-21, YHWH's speech (including its introduction), in which he promises to establish a covenant with Isaac and to make Ishmael fruitful and multiply him, is made up of **51** (3x17) words.

The most salient numerical features of Section III, §§9-11: 18,1-21,21

Like Section II, this section is also made up of **1560** (60x26) words.

In 19,14-31, the evacuation of the doomed city, there are **272** (16x17) words (**153 + 119**)

In 18,1-19,38 about Abraham, three Men and Lot, there are **1000** words.

In 20,1-18, Abraham and Sarah at Gerar, highlighted passages with: **26, 17, 52, 85, 102** words.

In 21,1-14, the birth of Isaac and the sending away of Hagar, with: **34, 51, and 78** words.

Genesis 18 has **13** divine speeches, and **170** words are devoted to Abraham's and Sarah's dialogues.

In Genesis 19 the words spoken by Lot, his daughters, and the mob, amount to **156** (6x26).

The most salient numerical features of Section IV, §§12-13: 21,22-22,19

The words devoted to all the dialogues in Section IV amount to **234** (9x26).

The story of Abraham's stay at Beer-Sheba is highlighted by **52** (2x26) and **68** (4x17) words.

The journey of Abraham and Isaac to Moriah (22,1-8) is made up of **136** (8x17) words.

The rest of the story is highlighted by **78** (3x26) and **68** (4x17) words.

The passage about the Binding of Isaac in Moriah as a whole, 22,1-19, has a distinct mathematical centre in terms of its 307 words: namely, the name of **יִצְחָק** in v 9b: 307=**153+1+153**. The **153**(9x17) words flanking the name symbolically express God's eighteenfold(!) presence. The author used this meticulously organized architecture of the text to demonstrate Isaac's *real* position in the fateful situation of being bound on the altar: He is surrounded by God's presence which guarantees his safety! For more particulars, see my article [Numerical Features of Genesis 22:1-19](#).

The most salient numerical features of Section V, §§14-17: 22,20-25,11

Sarah's death and burial in 23,1-16 is highlighted by **170** words (**68 + 68 + 34**).

The entire story of Abraham's servant going in search of a bride for Isaac (Genesis 24) is for 100% governed by the divine name number **17**, through its **918** (54x17) words. This was deliberately done in order to stress the presence of YHWH in the events described in this important story.

The first leg of the journey of the servant until he arrives at the well (24,1-11), has **170** words.

Abraham's speech addressed to his servant (24,6-8) is made up of **51** (3x17) words.

The episode of the servant's prayer (24,12-18) and his encounter with Rebecca: **102** (6x17) words.

The whole story up to the point that Rebecca identifies herself (24,1-25) has **357** (21x17) words.

The episode of Laban's reaction to Rebecca's account of the events (24,30-33) has **68** (4x17) words.

The servant's speech in which he ascribes his success to God (24,39-49) has **182** (7x26) words.

The episode of the family's reluctance to let Rebecca go away (24,55-61) has **78** (3x26) words.

Vs 50-51, about the permission given by Laban and Betuel for her to marry, have **26** words.

Vs 59-60, about the family dispatching her and giving her their blessing, have **26** words.

The dramatic episode about the servant introducing her to his master (vs 64-66) **34** (2x17) words.

Altogether **34** words are devoted to the five utterances of Rebecca in vs 18.19.24.25 and 58.

The conclusion of Section IV, 25,7-11, about Abraham's last days, is made up of **68** (4x17) words.

Part V, Genesis 25,12-35,29 The Toledoth of Ishmael and Isaac

Genesis 25,12-18 The Toledoth of Ishmael

The fact that the Toledoth of Isaac had originally **364** (14x**26**) verses means that, on the level of verses, the entire text was governed by the divine name number **26**. However, as we have seen, the Masoretes created an extra verse by splitting 35,22, achieving **365** verses – see page 2 above. Whatever the case may be, the passage has been designed as a separate literary entity, which has been finalized and sealed by the **78** (3x**26**) occurrences of the name YHWH. Additionally, 272 of the 365 verses (74%) and 3426 of the 4942 words (69%) are highlighted by **17** and **26**.

In terms of content, and with due regard to the Masoretic layout markers, the text can be divided into seven coherent Sections. Strikingly, only one of them stands out, being in its entirety governed by a divine name number, namely Section VI which is made up of **34** verses and **459** (27x**17**) words.

Section I	25,19-34	Esau and Jacob: their birth and youth	P	196
Section II	26,1-33	Isaac's stay in Gerar and Beer-Sheba	S	444
Section III	26,34-28,9	Jacob obtains Esau's blessing		
	26,34-35	Esau marries two Hittite women	S	22
	27,1-28,9	Isaac is deceived: Jacob is blessed	S	770 (70x11)
Section IV	28,10-32,3	Jacob on his way to Haran and his sojourn with Laban	P	2021
Section V	32,4-33,17	Jacob, now called Israel, is confronted with Esau	S	652
Section VI	33,18-34,31	Jacob at Shechem, where his daughter Dinah is raped		
	33,18-20	Jacob obtains land at Shechem	S	
	34,1-31	The rape of Dinah	P	459 (27x17)
Section VII	35,1-29	Jacob revisits Bethel; the death of Rachel and Isaac		
	35,1-8	Jacob dwells in Bethel and visits Luz	P	
	35,9-22a	God gives his blessing to Jacob	P	
	35,22b-29	Jacob's children and the death of Isaac	P	378.

In **Section I, 25,19-34, the story of the birth of Esau and Jacob** (25,19-26): **102** (6x**17**) words are used.

In the story of their youth (25,27-34): **182** (7x**26**) words are highlighted (vs 27-32).

Taking 25,19 as the introduction to Section I, the rest of the story (25,20-34) has **187** (11x**17**) words.

In 25,19-34, the speeches comprise **43** words, while there are **153** (9x**17**) in the narrative sections.

Esau speaks altogether **17** words (**8** in v 30 and **9** in v 32).

In **Section II, 26,1-33, Isaac's stay in Gerar and Beer-Sheba**: the opening verse has **17** words.

YHWH's second speech (v 24, including the introduction) has **17** words.

The dialogues of Isaac and his servants (including the introductions) have **34** (2x**17**) words.

The lengthy speech of Abimelech and Pichol (26,28-29) is made up of **34** (2x**17**) words.

Section III 26,34-28,9 Jacob obtains Esau's blessing

In the story how Isaac is deceived (26,34-27,17), **17**, **26**, **119** (7x**17**) and **26** words are highlighted.

The passage dealing with Rebecca's scheming to deceive Isaac, 27,5-14, has **119** (7x**17**) words.

In the story how Rebecca's plans are executed (27,18-29) **156** (6x**26**) words are used.

In the story how Esau reacted to the deception of his father (27,34-45) **187** (11x**17**) words are used.

In the story about Jacob being sent to Haran by his father (27,46-28,9) **153** (9x**17**) words are used.

In 27b-29 the blessing speech by Isaac is highlighted by its **34** (2x**17**) words.

Special emphasis is laid on the words spoken by Esau (27,1-28,9), altogether **52** (2x**26**).

The words devoted to his speaking (including the 16 words of the introductions): **68** (4x**17**).

Since the multiples of **26** and **17** signify YHWH's presence in the events described in the text, this is another way to symbolically express YHWH's approval of Esau's position.

God speaks **52** (2x**26**) words in 28,13-15, another **7** in 31,3 and **9** in 31,24, altogether **68** (4x**17**).

Section IV 28,10-32,3 Jacob on his way to Haran and his sojourn with Laban

In 28,10-17, Jacob's nightly dream at Bethel is described with **119** (7x17) words.

In 29,1-11, Jacob goes east and meets Rachel: **156** (6x26) words.

In 29,12-21, Jacob meets Laban and his daughters: highlighted by **78** (3x26) and **34** (2x17) words.

In 30,2-3, Rachel allows Bilhah to bear a son for Jacob: **26** words.

In 30,9-13, Leah gives Zilpah as a wife to Jacob: **26** and **17** words.

In 30,14-24, the birth of Issachar, Zebulon, Dinah, and Joseph: highlighted by **102** (6x17) words.

In 30,25-36, Laban urges Jacob to stay longer: **34** and **130** (5x26) words.

In 30,37-31,21, how Jacob grew exceedingly rich: highlighted by **17**, **26**, **85**, **52**, and **17** words.

In 30,17-21, how Rachel stole her father's household gods: **68** (4x17) words.

In 31,22-32, Laban in pursuit of Jacob and the household gods: **153** (9x17) words.

In 31,47-50, Laban and Jacob make a covenant: **104** (4x26) words.

In 28,10-32,3, the words in Laban's speeches amount to **234** (9x26) words.

In 31,5-10, Jacob speaks **78** (3x26) words and **52** (2x26) in 31,11-13.

In 30,1-8, Rachel speaks **34** (2x17) words and altogether **34** (2x17) in the rest of the story.

In 31,14-16, Leah and Rachel speak (plural) **34** (2x17) words (with **130** [5x26] letters).

Section V 32,4-33,17 Jacob/Israel is confronted with Esau

It is not surprising to find that this section consists of **47** verses, since this number represents the numerical value of the name יעקב: $10+16+19+2=47$. Moreover, 32,5-7 and 32,31-33, and 33,1-3 are also made up of **47** words, all of which may be interpreted as signifying Jacob's 'signature' in his confrontation with Esau.

In 32,7, Jacob's fear for Esau is highlighted by **17** words.

In 32,10-12, Jacob reminds God of his steadfast love in the past: **51** (3x17) words.

In 32,15-16, Jacob sends a gift to Esau: **520** (20x26) cud-chewing animals and 30 donkeys, together **550**, which is **10x55**, the square number of **10**, symbolically the highest possible number of animals.

In 32,16-17, the first instructions given by Jacob in view of the confrontation: **17** + **17** words.

In 32,23-33, the wrestling episode with the Man: **26** + **34** words; Jacob speaks altogether **17** words, which can only mean: God is with Jacob! This is perfectly in line with the fact that in Section V as a whole he speaks in total **260** words and together with Esau (29) **289** (17x17) words!

In 32,32-33, the aetiological explanation of the tabu on the sciatic muscle is made up of **34** words.

In 33,1-17, the episodes of the bowing before Esau are specifically highlighted: **26** words in 33,2-3 and **34** in 33,5-7. The preparations for the brothers' journey (33,10-17) are highlighted by **102** (6x17) words.

Section VI 33,18-34,31 Jacob at Shechem, where Dinah is raped

This passage is in its entirety governed by the divine name number **17**: it is composed of **34** (2x17) verses and **459** (27x17) words. Additionally 79% of the individual verses and 77% of the words in certain passages are highlighted by **85** (5x17), **78** (3x26), **17**, **26**, **52** (2x26), **17**, and **78** (3x26) words.

In 34,21-23, the words spoken by Hamor and Shechem to their fellow-townsmen amount to **52** (2x26).

In the narrative sections of Section VI as a whole (that is to say, excluding the dialogues) dealing with the answer of Dinah's brothers to Shechem and his father, the request by Hamor and Shechem to the townsmen, and the circumcision of the males, have respectively **17**, **34**, and **17** words.

Section VII 35,1-29 Jacob revisits Bethel; the death of Rachel and Isaac

In terms of verses and words, 22 of the 30 verses (72%) and 266 of the 378 words (70%) are governed by the divine name numbers **17** and **26**. The name Jacob occurs no less than **17x**. Note that it is also said of Jacob that he lived **17** years in the land of Egypt and that the years of his life were 147 (47,28, made up of **17** words!). And Joseph was **17** years old when he was shepherding the flock with his brothers (37,2).

Until this point in the book, the divine name occurs **153x** (9x17), the last instance being in 32,10.

The **34 (2x17)** words of Jacob's address to his household in 35,2-3 are meticulously divided into 8 in the introduction and **26** in the speech, highlighting his words through both **17** and **26**.

The narrative in 35,4-8 relating how Jacob's order was executed and that he arrived in Canaan, where he hid the foreign gods and the earrings under an oak, consists of **78 (3x26)** words.

The divine oracle in 35,11-12 is made up of **26** words, precisely as the oracle in 46,3-4!

In 35,13-15, the scene in which Jacob sets up a pillar to mark Bethel as the place where God has spoken to him, is made up of **34 (2x17)** words.

For a plausible explanation of the lifespans of the Patriarchs, see Observation 16 in [Part V](#).

Part VI, Genesis 36,1-37,1 The Toledoths of Esau

Seeing that the heading of the Toledoth of Jacob is to be found in 37,2, verse 1 strictly belongs to the Toledoth of Esau. Therefore, the **Petuchah** after 36,43 should be interpreted as a layout marker that does not have the function of a delimiting device, but only serves to direct special attention to what follows: the important information that Jacob dwelt in the land of his fathers' sojournings, in Canaan.

The resulting delimitation is strongly underpinned by the numerical features of the text, which is made up of **44 (4x11)** verses and **494 (19x26)** words. The symbolic significance is that the entire family story of Esau: his temporary stay in Canaan, his wealth acquired there, and his departure for a land 'away from his brother Jacob' (v 6b), is from beginning to end determined and governed by YHWH as signified by the numerical value of his name, **26**. This is also expressed by the fact that 33 of the 44 individual verses (75%) and 385 of the 494 words (78%) are governed by the divine name numbers **17** and **26**.

The text divides into 5 paragraphs, partly supported by layout markers and numerical considerations:

§ 1, 36,1-5, The descendants of Esau in Canaan:	composed of 54 words.
§ 2, 36,6-8, Esau leaves Canaan to settle in Edom:	composed of 51 (3x17) words.
§ 3, 36,9-19, The descendants of Esau in Edom:	11 verses, composed of 153 (9x17) words.
§ 4, 36,20-30, The descendants of Se'ir the Horite:	11 verses, highlighted by 26 and 68 words.
§ 5, 36,31-37,1, The kings of Edom and Esau's chiefs:	11 of the 14 verses (vs 32-42) are highlighted by 51 + 52 words.

The fact that there are no less than four instances in which the number of fulfilment, **11**, is used, requires an explanation. It express symbolically, in my opinion, the fulfilment of the 'blessing' Isaac gave to Esau, "Your dwelling will be far from the richness of the land, far from the dew of heaven above" (27,39). This is a very apt description of the region.

For the conspicuous use of the number **11** in connection with the fulfilment of the land promises in Deuteronomy, see Observation 9 in my analysis of [Deuteronomy 1-3](#).

Part VII, Genesis 37,2-50,26 The Toledoth of Jacob

The Story of Joseph is a well-constructed masterpiece of storytelling. There is no doubt about the literary skill of its author or the basic unity of the story, including the Story of Judah and Tamar in Chapter 38, which has generally been regarded as an erratic block in the story. In terms of the storyline in the Story of Ancient Israel in Genesis-Kings, the function of the Joseph story is clearly to set the stage for the events described in the book of Exodus. This is unexpectedly corroborated by the relative scarcity of the name YHWH: it appears only 12x (38,7.10 [3x], 39,2.3.5.21.23 [8x], and 49,8 [1x]). The conspicuous absence of the divine name in the rest of the Joseph story (40-50, except for 49,8 in the Blessing of Jacob) can be explained as a conscious decision to curtail the use of the name in order to pave the way for the revelation of the name in the book of Exodus.

In accordance with the Masoretic layout markers the text divides into **12** main sections which are perfectly in agreement with the contents in terms of the various episodes:

Section I,	37,2-36	Joseph sold into Egyptian slavery	P	35 verses
Section II	38,1-30	The story of Judah and Tamar	S	30 verses
Section III	39,1-23	Joseph's life in Egypt: he ends up in prison	S	23+ verses
Section IV	40,1-23	Joseph interprets the dreams of the butler and baker	P	23+ verses
Section V	41,1-42,38	Joseph rises from slave to Governor of Egypt		95+ verses
Section VI	43,1-44,17	Joseph's brothers confronted with him in Egypt	P	51=192 verses
Section VII	44,18-46,7	Jacob and his household emigrate to Egypt	S	52 verses
Section VIII	46,8-27	Jacob's descendants who emigrated to Egypt	P	20 verses
Section IX	46,28-47,31	The Israelites in Goshen: Joseph's land reforms	P	38+ verses
Section X	48,1-22	The ailing Jacob blesses Joseph's sons	P	22+ verses
Section XI	49,1-26	Jacob's testamentary blessing for his sons	P	26+ verses
Section XII	49,27-50,26	The death of Jacob and Joseph		End 33=119.

Sections III-VI, dealing with Joseph's life in Egypt until his meeting with his brothers, are made up of altogether **192** verses, which is a multiple (4x) of **48**, the numerical value of יוסף (10+6+15+17=48).

This should certainly not be waved aside as a matter of coincidence, for this is a typical example of the scribal device of using the numerical value of the name of a character to signify his 'signature' –for more examples, see in Part IV page 3 (**Abram**) and page 15 (**Rebecca**), and in Part V pages 18-19 (**Jacob**).

Sections VI and VII occupy pride of place at the centre of the twelve Sections: **12=5+2+5**. The importance of the events described here, which definitely lead to the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, is extra highlighted by the fact that the two sections are made up of **51** (3x17) and **52** (2x26) verses respectively.

Another significant numerical feature is that **Sections IX-XII**, dealing with the sojourn of the Israelites in Goshen, have altogether **119** (7x17) verses, which symbolize the sevenfold(!) presence of God in Goshen.

Section I 37,2-36 Joseph Sold into Egyptian Slavery

In terms of content (episodes) and numerical considerations, the section can be divided into 4 paragraphs:

- § 1 37,2-11 Joseph's dreams of greatness: highlighted by **153** (9x17) words.
- § 2 37,12-17 Jacob sends Joseph to his brothers: highlighted by **26** words.
- § 3 37,18-27 Joseph in great danger in Dothan: highlighted by **102** (6x17) words.
- § 4 37,28-37 Joseph carried away to Egypt: highlighted by **52** (2x26) and **17** words.

The most significant features of the dialogues and narrative are that Joseph's brothers speak in total **78** (3x26) words: in vs 8-20 the brothers speak **26** words; in vs 21-22 Reuben speaks **17** words, and in the rest of the story Reuben and Judah, the two brothers who try to save Joseph, speak altogether **26** words. This means that **222** (153+26+17+26) of the 487 words (46%) are *additionally* highlighted by the two divine name numbers.

Section II 38,1-30 The Story of Judah and Tamar

The entire text of this masterly numerical composition, consisting of 405 words, is for 100% governed by multiples of **17** and **26** (51+130+68+156=405). This also goes for the number of letters: **1513** (89x17).

- § 1 38,1-5 The birth of Judah's three sons: composed of **51** (3x17) words.
- § 2 38,6-14 Er and Onan die: Tamar is widowed: composed of **130** (5x26) words.
- § 3 38,15-19 Judah gives a pledge and lies with 'Tamar': composed of **68** (4x17) words.
- § 4 38,20-30 The exposure of Judah and the birth of Tamar's twins: composed of **156** (6x26) words.

A word count of the speeches and the narrative sections has shown that Judah speaks altogether **60** words, his friend **16**. Judah's string of 9 speeches are meticulously built up as follows: 9+8(=17)+5+4(=26)+6+5+12+2(=51[3x17])+9=60. The townsmen speak altogether **17** words, Tamar and the midwife in total **36** words.

Section III 39,1-23 Joseph and the Wife of Potiphar

No less that 20 of the 23 verses (87%) and 300 of the 347 words (86%) are governed by **17** and **26**.

- | | |
|---|---|
| § 1 YHWH is with Joseph and he prospers: | highlighted by 52 (2x 26) words. |
| § 2 Potiphar's wife tries to seduce Joseph: | composed of 153 (9x 17) words. |
| § 3 Accused of rape, he ends up in prison: | highlighted by 78 (3x 26) words. |

Joseph speaks **35** words and the woman **53**, of which she speaks **26** to the men of the household (vs 14-15).

Section IV 40,1-23 Joseph Interprets the Dreams of the Butler and the Baker

The whole text is governed by the number **26** through its **312** (12x**26**) words. Additionally, 14 of the 23 verses (61%) and 179 of the 312 words (57%) are highlighted by **17** and **26**.

- | | |
|---|---|
| § 1 39,1-5 Joseph meets Pharaoh's butler and baker in prison: | highlighted by 68 (4x 17) words. |
| § 2 39,6-15 The butler's dream and Joseph's interpretation: | highlighted by 17 + 51 (3x 17) words. |
| § 3 39,16-23 The baker's dream and Joseph's interpretation: | highlighted by 17 and 26 words. |

The butler and the baker speak altogether **60** words: 5 together (v 8) + 32 by the butler and 23 by the baker. Joseph speaks altogether 92 words.

Section V 41,1-42,38 Joseph Rises from Slave to Governer

In terms of verses and words, 78 of the 95 verses (82%) and 1039 of the 1304 words (80%) are governed by the numbers **17** and **26**. In the entire section the passages about crucial events and situations are additionally highlighted by **17** or **26** words (or their multiples).

- | | |
|---|--|
| § 1 41,1-13 Pharaoh's two dreams: the butler remembers Joseph: | composed of 170 words. |
| § 2 41,14-36 The dreams interpreted: the consequences: | highlighted by 52 , 52 , and 102 (6x 17) words. |
| § 3 41,37-45 Pharaoh praises Joseph and makes him his governer: | composed of 130 (5x 26) words. |
| § 4 41,46-57 Joseph (30 years old) makes a tour of inspection: | composed of 17+26+102 (6x 17) words. |
| § 5 42,1-5 The first visit of Joseph's brothers to Egypt: | highlighted by 26 words. |
| § 6 42,6-17 The brothers are confronted with Egypt's governer: | highlighted by 104 words. |
| § 7 42,18-25 Joseph is deeply moved, but plays a trick on them: | highlighted by 26 and 51 words. |
| § 8 42,26-34 The brothers return home and report to Jacob: | highlighted by 104 (4x 26) words. |
| § 9 42,35-38 Jacob refuses to let Benjamin go to Egypt: | highlighted by 52 (2x 26) words. |

In Chapter 41, the word count does not yield any significant features of the 12 speeches and the narrative: Pharaoh's 7 speeches have 163 words; Joseph's 4 (including the interior monologues in vs 51 and 52) have 180 words, while the chief butler's speech has 57 words; the narrative sections contain 389 words.

In Chapter 42 the narrative parts, including the introductions, have 226 words.

Joseph speaks 84 words and Jacob **52** (2x**26**); the brothers speak 166 words.

Moreover, in vs 10-11 and also in v 13 the brothers speak **17** words.

In v 22 **17** words are devoted to Reuben's speaking, including the introduction (13+4).

In Genesis 41 the dialogues have altogether 400 words; in Genesis 42 they amount to 302, which means that in total 400+302=**702** (27x**26**) words are spoken in Section V.

Section VI 43,1-44,17 Joseph's Brothers Visit Egypt Again

Section V is a distinct literary entity consisting of **51** (3x**17**) verses, by which it is finalized and sealed.

This is underlined by the fact that they divide into **34** verses in §§1-3 (43,1-34) and **17** in §4 (44,1-17).

The end of the section is clearly marked by the Masoretic layout marker **Petuchah**, which indicates a crucial turning point in the storyline.

In terms of verses and words, 35 of the 51 verses (69%) and 498 of the 718 words (68%) are governed by **17** and **26**. Special care has been taken to make up groups of their multiples: **102**, **68** (2x), and **156** words.

- § 1 43,1-15 To buy more corn, Benjamin must go too: highlighted by **17**, **26**, and **102** (6x17) words.
 § 2 43,16-25 The brothers are taken to Joseph's house: highlighted by **68** (4x17) and **26** words.
 § 3 43,26-34 Joseph and his brothers at the banquet: highlighted by **68** (4x17) and **26** words.
 § 4 44,1-17 Joseph's trick with the silver goblet: highlighted by **156** (6x26) words.

In Section VI the narrative sections have 292 words; the brothers (plural) speak 121 words.

Judah: 95 words, Jacob: 72 words, and Joseph (and his steward): 138 words (124+14).

This means that the words in the dialogues amount altogether to 215+72+138=425 (25x17)!

In the narrative sections three dramatic episodes are specifically highlighted by **17** words:

The narrative section about the brothers being brought into the house of Joseph (43,17-18): **17** words.

The episode in which Joseph yearns for Benjamin and weeps in the inner room (43,30-31): **17** words.

The passage dealing with the sending away of the brothers (44,2b-3): **17** words.

Section VII 44,18-46,7 Jacob and his Household Emigrate to Egypt

- § 1 44,18-34 Judah's masterly speech, criticizing the governor: highlighted by **119** and **68** words.
 § 2 45,1-16 Joseph reveals his identity: reconciliation at last: highlighted by **153** (9x17) words.
 § 3 45,17-28 Pharaoh endorses Joseph's invitation to Jacob: highlighted by **17** and **85** words.
 § 4 46,1-7 Jacob sets out for Egypt with all that he has: highlighted by **85** words.

This section is made up of **52** (2x26) verses, by which it is rounded off and sealed. Together with Section V, with its **51** (3x17) verses, it occupies pride of place at the centre of Part VII.

The most striking feature of the dialogues is that Joseph speaks altogether **153** (9x17).

Moreover, Jacob/Israel and all his sons, including Joseph, speak in total **237+153=390** (15x26) words.

When God reveals himself to Jacob and encourages him to go to Egypt, he speaks **26** words.

Section VIII 46,8-27 Jacob's Descendants Who Emigrated to Egypt

Vs	Texts	Words	Let	Sum w	Contents and Structure
1	Gen 46,8	11+	48	11	These are the descendants of Jacob who came into Egypt:
2	Gen 46,9	6=17	29	17	Reuben ¹ : Enoch ² , Pulla ³ , Hezron ⁴ , Carmi ⁵
3	Gen 46,10	10	46	27	Simeon ⁶ : Jemuel ⁷ , Jamin ⁸ , Ohad ⁹ , Jachin ¹⁰ , Zohar ¹¹ , Saul ¹²
4	Gen 46,11	5	20	32	Levi ¹³ : Gershon ¹⁴ , Kohath ¹⁵ , Merari ¹⁶
5	Gen 46,12	17	68	49	Judah ¹⁷ : Er ¹⁸ , Onan ¹⁹ , Shelah ²⁰ , Perez ²¹ , Zerah ²² + Hezron ²³ , Hamul ²⁴
6	Gen 46,13	6	27	55	Issachar ²⁵ : Tola ²⁶ , Pua ²⁷ , Job ²⁸ , Shimron ²⁹
7	Gen 46,14	5	23	60	Zebulun ³⁰ : Sered ³¹ , Elon ³² , Jahleel ³³
8	Gen 46,15	17	63	77	Together with his daughter Dinah 33 descendants born by Leah to Jacob.
9	Gen 46,16	9	39	86	Gad ¹ : Ziphion ² , Haggi ³ , Shuni ⁴ , Ezbon ⁵ , Eri ⁶ , Arodi ⁷ , Areli ⁸
10	Gen 46,17	12	54	98	Asher ⁹ : Imnah ¹⁰ , Ishvah ¹¹ , Ishvi ¹² , Beriah ¹³ , sister Serah ¹⁴ + Heber ¹⁵ , Malchiel ¹⁶
11	Gen 46,18	15	49	113	These are the 16 descendants born by Zilpah to Jacob.
12	Gen 46,19	6	23	119	The sons born by Rachel to Jacob: Joseph and Benjamin.
13	Gen 46,20	17	60	136	Joseph ¹ : Manasseh ² , Ephraim ³
14	Gen 46,21	12	49	148	Benjamin ⁴ : Bela ⁵ , Becher ⁶ , Ashbel ⁷ [and the sons of Bela were] - see BHS Gera ⁸ , Naaman ⁹ , Ehi ¹⁰ , Rosh ¹¹ , Muppim ¹² , Huppim ¹³ , Ard ¹⁴
15	Gen 46,22	10	33	158	These are the 14 descendants born by Rachel to Jacob.
16	Gen 46,23	3	10	161	The son of Dan ¹ : Hushim ²
17	Gen 46,24	6	27	167	Naphtali ³ : Jahzeel ⁴ , Guni ⁵ , Jezer ⁶ , Shillem ⁷
18	Gen 46,25	15	49	182	These are the 7 descendants born by Bilhah to Jacob. 182 = 7x26
19	Gen 46,26	15+	55	197	Vs 26-27 stand apart as a concluding enumeration of Jacob's descendants
20	Gen 46,27	15=30	58	212	totalling 70 persons. Klaas Eikelenboom drew my attention to the striking fact
20	46,8-27	212	830	212	that 212 is the decimal value of ל (30) + יעקב (182):10+70+100+2. The word
					ל יעקב occurs no less than 5x in the text: vs. 15, 18, 22, 25, and 26.

The enumeration of Jacob's descendants (46,8-25) is made up of **182 (7x26)** words, by which it is strongly highlighted. Significantly enough, it has exactly the same number of words used for the Levitical Descent of Moses and Aaron (Exod 6,14-28)! Compare page 19 in the analysis of Exodus 1,1-15,21.

What meets the eye immediately is that there are four specifically highlighted passages, each consisting of **17** words: vs 8-9, v 12, v 15, and v 20. The purpose of the highlighting is to bring **Reuben**, **Judah**, **Daughter Dinah**, and **Joseph** specifically into the limelight.

Reuben is specifically focused on because he is the eldest son and potential successor to Jacob, but more particularly, because of the crucial role he played to save Joseph's life and to let Jacob emigrate to Egypt.

Judah is brought into the limelight for the role he played in his turn to save Joseph's life and to enable Jacob/Israel to emigrate to Egypt. Moreover, he qualifies as the second logical successor to Jacob.

Joseph is given special attention because of the pre-eminent position he attained in Egypt, his crucial role in the emigration of Jacob/Israel to Egypt and the measures taken by him to facilitate Israel's settlement. Therefore he qualifies as the third logical successor to Jacob.

For a recent indepth study of the succession question, see Benedikt Hensel's dissertation (BZAW 423), 2011.

Most strikingly, **Levi** receives no special attention, but this can be explained primarily in light of his disqualification (together with Simeon) in connection with the rape of Dinah and its bloody aftermath. Another reason for the fact that he is left out of special consideration in this context is that the author knew that he will get adequate attention in the book of Exodus as the ancestor of Moses and Aaron.

Daughter Dinah is specifically highlighted by **17** words not only because she is the only daughter of Jacob mentioned here – he had other daughters (see 37,35 and 46,7) –but also due to her (passive!) role in the disqualification of Simeon and Levi as potential successors to Jacob.

In the storyline, Section VIII functions as an intermezzo before the narrative about Israel's stay in Goshen.

Section IX 46,28-47,31 The Israelites in Goshen: Joseph's Land Reforms

Sections IX-XII, Gen 46,28-50,26, are a close-knit literary entity consisting of **119 (7x17)** verses by which they are finalized and sealed. They deal specifically with the sojourn of the Israelites in the land of Goshen. In terms of content and numerical considerations, the text divides into 4 paragraphs:

- § 1 46,28-47,4 God speaks to Jacob at Beer-sheba: composed of **170** words.
- § 2 47,5-14 Pharaoh tells Joseph to settle Israel in Goshen: composed of **153 (9x17)** words.
- § 3 47,15-19 He gives Egypt food in exchange for cattle: highlighted by **52 (2x26)** words.
- § 4 47,20-31 Joseph's revolutionary land reforms: highlighted by **52, 17, and 104 (4x26)** words.

The significance of the fact that Jacob lived **17** years in Egypt (47,28) is to symbolize that he is accompanied by YHWH's presence in the last years of his life. These **17** years are added to Jacob's age of **130** years (when he meets Pharaoh, 47,9) to achieve his lifespan of **147** years which is specifically mentioned here in 47,28.

Section X 48,1-22 The Ailing Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

- § 1 48,1-7 Joseph brings his sons to Jacob to be adopted: highlighted by **26** words.
- § 2 48,8-16 Jacob blesses Joseph through his sons: highlighted by **78 (3x26)** words.
- § 3 48,17-22 He upholds his decision and blesses them again: composed of **104 (4x26)** words.

In Section X, 13 of the 22 verses (59%) and 208 of the 350 words (59%) are highlighted by the number **26**.

Jacob and the messenger speak altogether 179 words (5+174), of which Jacob speaks **17** to Joseph (vs 8-11) and **52 (2x26)** in connection with the blessing for Joseph (vs 15-16 and 19).

Joseph and the messenger speak altogether 20 words, of which Joseph speaks **17**.

Section XI 49,1-26 Jacob's Testamentary Blessing for his Sons

The passage about the blessings for the eleven brothers are clearly delimited by the layout markers. Most intriguingly, the blessing for Benjamin (v 27) is detached from that of his brothers by the strong layout marker **P** which should absolutely not be ignored. The Masoretic delimitation is underscored by the fact that the passage (without Benjamin!) is composed of **26** verses which makes it a distinct literary entity. Moreover, verse 27 is structurally and numerically part and parcel of the first paragraph (49,27-33) of Section XI, which is another distinct unit with its **7** verses and **104** (4x26) words. As a matter of fact, the detachment of Benjamin is perfectly in line with his 'detached' position in the Toledoth of Jacob!

The blessings for Judah, Zebulon, and Issachar (vs 8-15) are made up of altogether **85** (5x17) words, by which this passage is specifically highlighted in order to stress the prominent status of these three sons.

Jacob summons his sons and speaks **17** words (in vs 1-2).

The fury and ruthlessness of Simeon and Levi are stressed by **26** words (vs 6-7).

Judah's qualities as a leader are specifically highlighted by **26** words (vs 9-10).

The negative qualities of Dan are highlighted by **17** words (vs 17-18).

The survival of Joseph, who has been fiercely attacked, is specifically highlighted by **34** words (vs 23-25).

Section XII 49,27-50,26 The Death of Jacob and Joseph

§ 1 49,27-33 Jacob orders his sons to bury him in Canaan: composed of **104** (4x26) words.

§ 2 50,1-14 Jacob's body is embalmed and duly buried: highlighted by **68** (4x17) words.

§ 3 50,15-21 The brothers reconciled; Joseph dies: § 3 and § 4 taken together are highlighted

§ 4 50,22-26 Epilogue: Joseph's last words and wishes by **85** (5x17) words (vs 21-26).

For the compositional technique to conclude a book with a number of words that are a multiple of **17** or **26** (Genesis, Exodus, and Deuteronomy), see page 3 of the [Introduction](#).

However, there is more to it: the eleven Toledoths are concluded by the **72 words** of the Epilogue functioning as an inclusion together with the **72 verses** of the first Toledoth! This is most appropriate, for **72** represents the numerical value of תולדות: 22+6+12+4+6+22=72.

The computer-assisted verse count in Genesis yields 1533 verses. In the Masoretic tradition, however, as noted at the end of Genesis, there are **1534** verses, which is 59x26. The extra verse was achieved by splitting 35,22 (for good reasons!) by means of a **Petuchah** into 22a and 22b.

The Divine Speeches in the Prologue, Genesis 1,1-2,3

Number	Texts	Introductions	Words Spoken by God	Totals
1	1,3	2	2	4
2	1,6	2	9+	11
3	1,9	2	9+	11
4	1,11	2	16=34	18
5	1,14	2	21+	23
6	1,20	2	13=34	15
7	1,22	4	9	13
8	1,24	2	10	12
9	1,26	2	17	19
10	1,28	3	16	19
11	1,29	2	44	46
11x	1,1-2,3	25	166	191

Speeches 2-4 (in Day 2 and Day 3) have **34** words; Speeches 4-5 (Day 3 and Day 4) have **34** words. Speech 9 in verse **26** (on Day 6, the creation of human beings) has **17** words. God speaks **11x**.

The Divine Speeches in Part I, Genesis 2,4-4,26

Number	Texts	Introductions	Words Spoken by God	Totals
1	2,16	6	18+	24
2	2,18	3	9+	12
3	3,9	2	1+	3
4	3,11	1	14+	15
5	3,13	4	3+	7
6	3,14	5	33+	38
7	3,16	3	13+	16
8	3,17	2	46+	48
9	3,22	3	19=156(6x26)	22
10	4,6	4	21	25
11	4,9	4	3	7
12	4,10	1	36	37
13	4,15	3	6	9
13x	2,4-4,26	41	222	263
24x	1,1-4,26	66	388	454

The 9 speeches in the Garden Story have **156 (6x26)** words.

The Divine Speeches in Part II-III, Genesis 5,1-11,26

Number	Texts	Introductions	Words Spoken by God	Totals
1	6,3	2	13	15
2	6,7	2	20	22
3	6,13	3	133	136
4	7,1	3	65	68
5	8,15	5	30	35
6	8,21	4	37	41
7	9,1	2	82	84
8	9,8	9	44	53
9	9,12	2	72	74
10	9,17	4	12	16
11	11,6	2	28	30
11x	5,1-11,26	38	536	574

Speech 3 (6,13-21) in which God instructs Noah how to build the Ark, has **3+133=136 (8x17)** words.

Speech 4 (7,1-4) in which God commands Noah to enter the Ark, has **3+65=68 (4x17)** words.

God speaks **11x**.

The Divine Speeches in Part IV, Genesis 11,27-25,11

Number	Texts	Introductions	God and his Agents	Totals
1	12,1	4	27	31
2	12,7	1	5	6
3	13,14	8	49	57
4	15,1	10	9	19
5	15,4	5	10	15
6	15,5a	1	9	10
7	15,5b	2	3	5

8	15,7	2	12	14
9	15,9	2	10	12
10	15,13	2	46	48
11	15,18	8	32	40
12	16,8	1 Angel	8 Angel	9 Angel
13	16,9	4 Angel	6 Angel	10 Angel
14	16,10	4 Angel	7 Angel	11 Angel
15	16,11	4 Angel	26 Angel	30 Angel
16	17,1	2	15	17
17	17,3	4	63	67
18	17,9	4	75	79
19	17,15	4	24	28
20	17,19	2	49	51
21	18,5	1 Agents	4 Agents	5 Agents
22	18,9	2 Agents	3 Agents	5 Agents
23	18,10	1	9	10
24	18,13	4	20	24
25	18,15	1	3	4
26	18,17	2	42	44
27	18,20	2	20	22
28	18,26	2	11	13
29	18,28	1	7	8
30	18,29	1	4	5
31	18,30	1	6	7
32	18,31	1	4	5
33	18,32	1	4	5
34	19,2	1 Angels	4 Angels	5 Angels
35	19,12	4 Angels	29 Angels	33 Angels
36	19,15	4 Angels	12 Angels	16 Angels
37	19,17*	1	14	15
38	19,21*	2	23	25
39	20,3	24	9	33
40	20,6	4	41	45
41	21,12	4	28	32
42	21,17	2 Angel	26 Angel	28 Angel
43	22,1	2	1	3
44	22,2	1	24	25
45	22,11	1 Angel	2 Angel	3 Angel
46	22,12	1 Angel	23 Angel	24 Angel
47	22,16	1 Angel	45 Angel	46 Angel
47x	11,27-25,11	146	903	1049

* In my opinion God 'Himself' speaks in these two cases, first and foremost because MT reads the *singular* form in both cases, and because it is only God 'Himself' who can say what is said in v 21.

God 'Himself' speaks **34** (2x17) times; his Agents **13** (11+2) times.

The Divine Speeches in Part V-VII, Genesis 25,12-50,26

Number	Texts	Introductions	God and his Agents	Totals
1	25,23	3	13+	16
2	26,2	1	55=68	56
3	26,24	1	16+	17
4	28,13	1	52=68	53
5	31,3	4	7	11
6	31,24	1	9	10
7	32,27	1 Agent	4 Agent	5 Agent
8	32,28	2 Agent	2 Agent	4 Agent
9	32,29	1 Agent	15 Agent	16 Agent
10	32,30	1 Agent	4 Agent	5
11	35,1	4	16	20
12	35,10	3	12	15
13	35,11	3	26	29
14	46,2	6	2	8
15	46,3	1	26	27
15x	25,12-50,26	33	259	292
97x	1,1-50,26	283	2086	2369
17x	1,1-50,26	Ang/Agents: 35	Angels/Agents: 220	250
80x	1,1-50,26	God: 255(15x17)	God: 1866	2116

In 25,23 and 26,2 God speaks altogether **68 (4x17)** words to Rebecca and Isaac.

In 26,24 and 28,13 God speaks altogether **68 (4x17)** words to Isaac and Jacob.

In 35,11 God speaks **26** words to Jacob at Bethel.

In 46,3 God speaks **26** words to Jacob/Israel at Beer-Sheba.

In the book of Genesis God (excluding his Angels/Agents) speaks altogether **80** times, and **255 (15x17)** words are used in the introductions.

His Angels and Agents speak altogether **17x**, which symbolically signifies that they are legitimate representatives of God and authorised by him.

In terms of the number of **spoken words**, we get the following picture:

Main Parts	God Himself	His Divine Angels	His Human Agents
Prologue	11x 166		
Part I	13x 222		
Parts II-III	11x 536		
Part IV	34x 708	11x 188	2x 7
Part V-VII	11x 234(9x26)		4x 25
Genesis 1-50	80x 1866	11x 188	6x 32

God and his Angels speak altogether $1866 + 188 = 2054 (79x26)$ words.

The only conclusion to be drawn seems to be that the Angels are closer to God than his human agents.