

# Psalm 28— 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](#)".

## Specific features of Psalm 28

- Psalm 28 and Psalm 27 share several features in terms of both form and content. Both have a bipartite structure, in both the direction of address defines the strophic structure, and both have as their leading idea God as a stronghold and saviour.
- The total number of words are determined by the numerical value, **95**, of the keyword **וְנִעְזַרְתִּי**, 'and I am sustained', occurring in v. 7 (6 + 14 + 16 + 7 + 20 + 22 + 10 = 95).

## Strophic structure - Canto/Stanza boundary: ||

- Van der Lugt: 1, 2-3 || 4-5 || 6-7, 8-9 (3 cantos with 5 strophes, 13 verselines, and 28 cola (taking v. 9 as a bicolon).
- Fokkelman: 1-2, 3, 4, 5 || 6-7, 8-9 (2 stanzas with 7 strophes, 15 verselines and 31 cola (taking vs. 2c, 5a and 9a as bicola and vs. 2 and 5 as 2-verseline strophes).
- Labuschagne: 1, 2, 3-4, 5 || 6-7, 8, 9 (2 cantos with 7 strophes, 13 verselines and 29 cola, regarding v. 9 as a tricolon and taking the direction of address into account).
- For an overview of other divisions of the text, see Van der Lugt, CAS, Psalm 28, § 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 הִתְהַלֵּל	1	1			
	אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה אֶקְרָא	1	3	3	3	
	צוּרֵי אֱלֹהִים תִּתְחַדֵּשׁ מִמְּנִי	4	4		4	
	פֶּן־תִּחְשָׁב מִמְּנִי	2	3	3	3	
	וְנִמְשַׁלְתִּי עִם־יְהוָה בּוֹר:	4		4	4	
	<b>Strophe 1 Total, v. 1</b>	14	= 10	+ 4	= 14	+ 0
2	שָׁמַע קוֹל תְּחַנּוּנָי	3	3		3	
	בְּשׁוֹעֵי אֱלֹהִים	2	2		2	
	בְּנִשְׁאֵי יָדַי אֶל־דְּבִיר קֹדֶשׁ:	5		5	5	
	<b>Strophe 2 Total, v. 2</b>	10	= 5	+ 5	= 10	+ 0
3	אֶל־תִּמְשַׁכְּנֵי עִם־רְשָׁעִים	4	4		4	
	וְעִם־פְּעֵלֵי אֲזָן	3	3		3	
	דְּבַרֵי שְׁלוֹם עִם־רַעֲיָהֶם	5	4	4	4	
	וְרָעָה בְּלִבָּבָם:	2		2	2	
	<b>Total, v. 3</b>	13	= 11	+ 2	= 13	+ 0
	<b>Total, v. 1-3</b>	37	= 26	+ 11	= 37	+ 0

4	תִּן־לָהֶם כִּפְּעָלָם וּכְרַע מִעַל־לֵיהֶם	6	3	3	3
			2	2	2
	Middle verseline: 4c-d <sup>א</sup> לָהֶם תִּן לָהֶם	7	4	4	4
	Middle colon: 29=14+ <sup>1</sup> +14 : הָשִׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם		3	3	3
	Middle words: 95 = 46 + <sup>3</sup> + 46	Total, v. 4	<u>12 = 9 + 3 = 12 + 0</u>		
	<b>Strophe 3</b>	<b>Total, v. 3-4</b>	<u>25 = 20 + 5 = 25 + 0</u>		
		Total, v. 1-4	49 = 35 + 14 = 49 + 0		
5	כִּי לֹא יִבְיִנוּ אֶל־פְּעֻלַּת יְהוָה וְאֶל־מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו יִהְרָסוּ וְלֹא יִבְנִים:	8	6	6	6
			3	3	3
	<b>Strophe 4</b>	<b>Total, v. 5</b>	<u>3 = 3 = 3</u>		
		Total, v. 2-5	<u>12 = 9 + 3 = 0 + 12</u>		
	<b>Canto I</b>	<b>Total, v. 1-5</b>	<u>47 = 34 + 13 = 35 + 12</u>		
			<b>61 = 44 + 17 = 49 + 12</b>		
6	בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה כִּי־שָׁמַע קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי: Total, v. 6	9	2	2	2
			4	4	4
		Total, v. 6	6 = 2 + 4 = 0 + 6		
7	יְהוָה עָזִי וּמִגְּדִי בּוֹ בָטַח לִבִּי וּנְעֻזָּתִי = 95 (6+14+16+7+20+22+10 = 95)	10	3	3	3
			4	4	4
	וַיַּעֲלֵז לִבִּי	11	2	2	2
	וּמְשִׁירֵי אֲהוּרָנִי: Total, v. 7		2	2	2
	<b>Strophe 5</b>	<b>Total, v. 6-7</b>	<u>11 = 9 + 2 = 0 + 11</u>		
		Total, v. 1-7	<u>17 = 11 + 6 = 0 + 17</u>		
			<b>78 = 55 + 23 = 49 + 29</b>		
8	יְהוָה עֲזָרָמוֹ וּמְעוֹז יְשׁוּעוֹת מְשִׁיחוֹ הוּא: <b>Strophe 6</b>	12	3	3	3
		<b>Total, v. 8</b>	4	4	4
		Total, v. 5-8	<u>7 = 3 + 4 = 0 + 7</u>		
		Total, v. 1-8	<u>36 = 23 + 13 = 0 + 36</u>		
			<b>85 = 58 + 27 = 49 + 36</b>		
9	<b>Coda</b> הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת־עַמּוֹךְ וּבְרַךְ אֶת־נַחֲלָתְךָ וּרְעֵם וּנְשָׂאֵם עַד־הָעוֹלָם: <b>Strophe 7</b>	13	3	3	3
		<b>Total, v. 9</b>	3	3	3
		Total, v. 8-9	<u>4 = 4 = 4</u>		
	<b>Canto II</b>	<b>Total, v. 6-9</b>	<u>10 = 6 + 4 = 10 + 0</u>		
		Total, v. 5-9	<u>17 = 9 + 8 = 10 + 7</u>		
		Total, v. 1-9	<u>34 = 20 + 14 = 10 + 24</u>		
		With the heading, v. 1-9	<u>46 = 29 + 17 = 10 + 36</u>		
			<b>95 = 64 + 31 = 59 + 36</b>		
			96 = 65 + 31		

## Observations

- In terms of the 95 words of the poem, the arithmetic centre is גְּמוּלָם, 'their due reward' in v. 4d (95 = 47 + 1 + 47). This word is in itself meaningful, but the three middle words may constitute the consciously designed meaningful centre (95 = 46 + 3 + 46). They express the gist of the poem:

הָשִׁב גְּמוּלָם לָהֶם Render them their due reward!

The meaningful centre on word level coincides precisely with the middle colon, which reinforces its pivotal position (29 = 14 + 1 + 14). Moreover, v. 4d falls within the middle verseline, v. 4c-d (13 = 6 + 1 + 6).\*

2. The meaningful centre is positioned precisely at the end of the first part of the prayer, just before the contemplation in which the poet speaks *about* God (vs. 5-8, Column d).
3. The strophic structure of the psalm is to a great extent determined by the change in the direction of address, a rhetorical device that is overlooked by most scholars. This means that there is a strong caesura between vs. 4||5. In terms of this device and content, the text divides into 6 strophes:

v. 1	Strophe 1	Prayer: YHWH, unto you I call, my rock
v. 2	Strophe 2	Prayer: hear my supplication and my call for help
vs. 3-4	Strophe 3	Prayer: do not judge me along with evildoers; requite them!
v. 5	Strophe 4	Words spoken about God: YHWH will strike them down!
vs. 6-7	Strophe 5	Words spoken about God: blessed be YHWH, my protector
v. 8	Strophe 6	Words spoken about God: YHWH is strength to his people
v. 9	Coda: Strophe 7	Concluding prayer: save your people and shepherd them!

In Canto I, the words directly addressed to God (Strophes 1-3) is concluded by a contemplative statement that YHWH will destroy the evildoers (Strophe 5).

In Canto II, on the other hand, the contemplative statements about YHWH as protector and as the strength of his people (Strophes 4-6) are concluded by a prayer for deliverance and protection (Strophe 7). The concluding strophe is clearly a coda, highlighted by the abrupt switch back to words directly addressed to God (as in vs. 1-4). All this is very reminiscent of Psalm 27. See Observation 2 in my Analysis of [Psalm 27](#).

4. The divine name numbers feature in the following way in the poem:
  - vs. 1-3     **26** words before atnach
  - vs. 1-5     **17** words after atnach
  - vs. 2-5     **34** (2 x **17**) before atnach
  - vs. 6-7     **17** words in total
  - vs. 1-7     **78** (3 x **26**) words in total
  - vs. 1-8     **85** (5 x **17**) words in total
  - vs. 5-9     **17** words after atnach
  - vs. 8-9     **17** words in total.
5. The total number of words in the psalm correspond with the numerical value (**95**) of the word **וְנִצְּרָתִי**, 'and I am sustained' (v. 7a). This is an important keyword, because it expresses the *survival* of the speaker amid God's judgement of the evildoers in retribution for their evil deeds. For more examples of this intriguing device, see the General Introduction, "The numerical value of a keyword in the text".
6. The name **יְהוָה** occurs 5 times (vs. 1a, 5a, 6a, 7a and 8a).

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\* It is worth noting that the pivotal verseline is made up of exactly **26** letters, with **15** in 4c and **11** in 4d.