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## Psalm 94

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# Psalm 94— Logotechnical Analysis

## Guidelines

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

## Specific features of Psalm 94

- The meaningful centre of this psalm is not to be found on the level of words, but in terms of its **23** verselines: **v. 12**. Its pivotal position is highlighted by the middle colon (v. 12a) and by the middle instance of the **11** occurrences of the divine name.
- The *kabod*-numbers **23** and **32** (representing God's presence) appear to have an important structuring role, a feature this psalm shares with Psalm 95.
- Additionally, a very great number of occurrences of the divine name numbers **17** and **26** are woven into the fabric of the text, as a continuous connecting thread. A special feature is the considerable number of recurrent compositional formulas.

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

- Van der Lugt: 1-2, 3-4 | 5-7 || 8-9, 10-11 | 12-13, 14-15 || 16-17, 18-19 | 20-21, 22-23 (11 strophes with 23 verselines and 47 cola).
- Fokkelman: 1-2, 3-4, 5-7, 8-9, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15, 16-17, 18-19, 20-21, 22-23 (11 strophes, with 23 verselines and 47 cola).
- Labuschagne: as Van der Lugt (11 strophes, with 23 verselines and 47 cola).

## 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	אֵל-נִקְמֹת יְהוָה <sup>^</sup>	1	3	3	3	
	אֵל נִקְמֹת הוֹפִיעַ:		3	3	3	
	Total, v. 1	6	= 3	+ 3	= 6	+ 0
2	הַנֶּשֶׂא שִׁפְט הָאָרֶץ <sup>^</sup>	2	3		3	
	הָשֵׁב נִמּוּל עַל-נְאִים:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 2	7	= 3	+ 4	= 7	+ 0
	Strophe 1 Total, v. 1-2	13	= 6	+ 7	= 13	+ 0
3	עַד-מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה <sup>^</sup>	3	4		4	
	עַד-מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יַעֲלֹז:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 3	8	= 4	+ 4	= 8	+ 0
4	יִבְיַעו יִדְבְּרוּ עֲתָק <sup>^</sup>	4	3		3	
	יִתְאַמְרוּ כָּל-פֹּעַלִי אֱוֹן:		4	4	4	
	Total, v. 4	7	= 3	+ 4	= 7	+ 0
	Strophe 2 Total, v. 3-4	15	= 7	+ 8	= 15	+ 0
	Canticle I.1 Total, v. 1-4	28	= 13	+ 15	= 28	+ 0

5	עֲמֹד יְהוָה יִדְבָּקֵנוּ וְנִחַלְתֶּדָּה יַעֲנוּ: Total, v. 5 Total, v. 1-5	5	3 3 3 2 2 2 5 = 3 + 2 = 5 + 0 33 = 16 + 17 = 33 + 0
6	אֶלְמֶנָה וְגֵר יִהְרֹגוּ וַיְתוּמִים יִרְצָחוּ: Total, v. 6 Strophe 3 Total, v. 5-6 Total, v. 4-6 Total, v. 2-6	6	3 3 3 2 2 2 5 = 3 + 2 = 5 + 0 10 = 6 + 4 = 10 + 0 17 = 9 + 8 = 17 + 0 32 = 16 + 16 = 32 + 0
7	וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה יְהוָה וְלֹא יִבִּין אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב: Strophe 4 Total, v. 7 Canticle I.2 Total, v. 5-7 Total, v. 3-7 Canto I Total, v. 1-7	7	4 4 4 4 4 4 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0 18 = 10 + 8 = 18 + 0 33 = 17 + 16 = 33 + 0 46 = 23 + 23 = 46 + 0
8	בֵּינוּ בָּעֵרִים בָּעֵם וּכְסִילִים מְתֵי תִשְׁכִּילוּ: Total, v. 8 Total, v. 1-8	8	3 3 3 3 3 3 6 = 3 + 3 = 0 + 6 52 = 26 + 26 = 46 + 6
9	הַנֹּשֶׁעַ אֵזֶן הָלֹא יִשְׁמָע אִם-יֵצֵר עֵין הָלֹא יִבִּיט: Total, v. 9 Strophe 5 Total, v. 8-9 Total, v. 7-9	9	4 4 4 5 5 5 9 = 4 + 5 = 0 + 9 15 = 7 + 8 = 0 + 15 23 = 11 + 12 = 0 + 23
10	הַיּוֹסֵר גּוֹיִם הָלֹא יוֹכִיחַ הַמְלִמֵּד אָדָם דָּעַת: Total, v. 10 Total, v. 1-10	10	4 4 4 3 3 3 7 = 4 + 3 = 0 + 7 68 = 34 + 34 = 46 + 22
11	יְהוָה יֹדַע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם כִּי-הִמָּה הִבָּל: Total, v. 11 Strophe 6 Total, v. 10-11 Total, v. 9-11 Canticle I.2 Total, v. 8-11	11	4 4 4 3 3 3 7 = 4 + 3 = 0 + 7 14 = 8 + 6 = 0 + 14 23 = 12 + 11 = 0 + 23 29 = 15 + 14 = 0 + 29
12	The middle אֲשֶׁר־יִסְרְנוּ יְהוָה verseline: 11 + 1 + 11 וּמִתּוֹרֶתְךָ תִּלְמְדֵנוּ: Middle colon: 23 + 1 + 23 Total, v. 12 Mid. divine name: 11 = 5 + 1 + 5 Total, v. 9-12	12	5 5 5 2 2 2 7 = 5 + 2 = 7 + 0 30 = 17 + 13 = 7 + 23
13	Middle word: לְהַשְׁקִיט לוֹ מִיָּמִי רָעָה 169 = 84 + 1 + 84 עַד יִפְרָה לְרִשָּׁע שְׁחַת: Total, v. 13 Strophe 7 Total, v. 12-13 Total, v. 9-13	13	4 4 4 4 4 4 8 = 4 + 4 = 8 + 0 15 = 9 + 6 = 15 + 0 38 = 21 + 17 = 15 + 23

14	כי לא־יטש יְהוָה עֲמוֹ <sup>א</sup> וְנִחַלְתּוּ לֹא יַעֲזֹב: Total, v. 14 Total, v. 1-14	14	5	5	5	3	3	3	8 = 5 + 3 = 0 + 8 98 = 52 + 46 = 61 + 37
15	כִּי־עַד־צֶדֶק יָשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט <sup>א</sup> וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל־לֵב: Total, v. 15 Strophe 8 Total, v. 14-15 Canticle II.2 Total, v. 12-15 Canto II Total, v. 8-15	15	5	5	5	4	4	4	9 = 5 + 4 = 0 + 9 17 = 10 + 7 = 0 + 17 32 = 19 + 13 = 15 + 17 61 = 34 + 27 = 15 + 46
16	מִי־יָקוּם לִי עִם־מַרְעִים <sup>א</sup> מִי־יִתְנַצֵּב לִי עִם־פָּעֲלֵי אֲנֹן: Total, v. 16 Total, v. 13-16 Total, v. 6-16	16	5	5	5	6	6	6	11 = 5 + 6 = 0 + 11 36 = 19 + 17 = 8 + 28 85 = 46 + 39 = 28 + 57
17	לוֹיֵל יְהוָה עֲזָרְתָהּ לִי <sup>א</sup> כְּמַעַט שִׁכְנָה דּוֹמָה נִפְשִׁי: Total, v. 17 Strophe 9 Total, v. 16-17 Total, v. 12-17 Total, v. 11-17	17	4	4	4	4	4	4	8 = 4 + 4 = 0 + 8 19 = 9 + 10 = 0 + 19 51 = 28 + 23 = 15 + 36 58 = 32 + 26 = 15 + 43
18	אִם־אֶמְרֵתִי מָטָה רָגְלִי <sup>א</sup> חֲסֹדֶךָ יְהוָה יִסְעָרְנִי: Total, v. 18 Total, v. 12-18	18	4	4	4	3	3	3	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0 58 + 32 + 26 = 22 + 36
19	בָּרֵב שְׂרַעֲפֵי בָקָרֶכּי <sup>א</sup> תִּנְחַוְמִיךָ יִשְׁעִשְׂעוּ נִפְשִׁי: Total, v. 19 Strophe 10 Total, v. 18-19 Canticle III.1 Total, v. 16-19 Total, v. 14-19 Total, v. 12-19 Total, v. 10-19 Total, v. 8-19	19	3	3	3	3	3	3	6 = 3 + 3 = 6 + 0 13 = 7 + 6 = 13 + 0 32 = 16 + 16 = 13 + 19 49 = 26 + 23 = 13 + 36 64 = 35 + 29 = 28 + 36 78 = 43 + 35 = 28 + 50 93 = 50 + 43 = 28 + 65
20	הִיחַבְּרֶךָ כֶּסֶף תְּהוֹתָ <sup>א</sup> יֵצֵר עֲמָל עַל־חֶק: Total, v. 20 Total, v. 10-20	20	3	3	3	4	4	4	7 = 3 + 4 = 7 + 0 85 = 46 + 39 = 35 + 50
21	יְגוּדִי עַל־נֶפֶשׁ צַדִּיקָ <sup>א</sup> וְדָם נָקִי יִרְשִׁיעוּ: Total, v. 21 Strophe 11 Total, v. 20-21 Total, v. 11-21 Total, v. 16-21 Total, v. 1-21	21	4	4	4	3	3	3	7 = 4 + 3 = 7 + 0 14 = 7 + 7 = 14 + 0 85 = 46 + 39 = 42 + 43 46 = 23 + 23 = 27 + 19 153 = 80 + 73 = 88 + 65

22	וַיְהִי יְהוָה לִי לְמִשְׁנָבֵה	22	4	4	4
	וְאֱלֹהֵי לְצֹר מַחְסִי:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 22		7	= 4 + 3 = 0 + 7	
	Total, v. 18-22		34	= 18 + 16 = 27 + 7	
	Total, v. 12-22		85	= 46 + 39 = 42 + 43	
23	וַיָּשָׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת־אוֹנֶם	23	4	4	4
	וּבִרְעָתָם יִצְמִיתָם		2	2	2
	יִצְמִיתָם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:		3	3	3
	Total, v. 23		9	= 6 + 3 = 0 + 9	
	Strophe 12 Total, v. 22-23		16	= 10 + 6 = 0 + 16	
	Canticle III.2 Total, v. 20-23		30	= 17 + 13 = 14 + 16	
	Canto III Total, v. 16-23		62	= 33 + 29 = 27 + 35	
	Total, v. 21-23		23	= 14 + 9 = 7 + 16	
	Total, v. 12-23		94	= 52 + 42 = 42 + 52	
	Total, v. 1-23		169	= 90 + 79 = 88 + 81	

## Observations

1. In terms of the **169** words of the psalm, its middle word is **מִיָּמִי**, 'from days of', in **v. 13a** (84 + **1** + 84). In passing it is interesting to note that **169** is the number **13** raised to the square, and that **13** represents the numerical value of the very first word **אֵל**, 'God', which is repeated at the beginning of the second colon. Note also the **13** words in Strophe 1. Since the middle word cannot be regarded as the meaningful centre of the psalm, we have to look for such a centre on another level, in my view, on the level of verselines. This brings **v. 12** into focus (**23** = 11 + **1** + 11 verselines):

אֲשֶׁרִי הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר־תִּסְרְנוּ יְהִי וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמָדְנוּ:

Happy the one whom you instruct, YH // and whom you teach from your law.

The beatitude introduced by **אֲשֶׁרִי** in the meaningful centre strongly reminds us of the beatitude in Psalm 33:12 where it also constitutes the meaningful centre. What is more, **אֲשֶׁרִי** is there the middle word! See my Analysis of [Psalm 33](#), Observation 1.

The middle verseline partly coincides with the middle colon, **v. 12b** (47 = **23** + **1** + **23**), which underlines its pivotal positioning, and its significance as the meaningful centre.

The meaningful centre is additionally highlighted by the middle instance of the 11 occurrences of the divine name (**v. 12a**) appearing here (as in **v. 7a**) as YH. Moreover, as in a considerable number of psalms, the meaningful centre is situated precisely at the crossroads of the alternating forms of address. Vs. 8-11, which precedes the central verseline, contain words *spoken about God* (Column **d**). In vs. 12-13, however, God is suddenly addressed directly (Column **c**). For both highlighting devices, see the General [Introduction](#), "Special devices to highlight the meaningful centre".

2. The alternating forms of address (Columns **c** and **d**) appear to have been employed only as an enlivening rhetorical device. I cannot detect any intentionally devised numerical pattern, except that Canto I has **46** (2 x **23**) words in addressed to God (Column **c**), while Canto II has **46** words spoken about God (Column **d**). Significantly, the **46** words of Canto I divide into precisely **23** words before, and **23** after atnach. Note also that the poem has **23** verselines (corresponding to the Masoretic verses) and that **23** cola flank the middle colon. The other *kabod*-number (**32**) occurs also rather frequently. Therefore, we may conclude that they have purposefully been used to symbolize God's presence.
3. Though we may allow for a measure of coincidence, the high frequency of occurrences of sacred numbers strongly indicates the author's deliberate effort to weave as many as possible into the text. The divine name numbers appear in fixed, recurrent formulas.

vs. 2-6	<b>32</b> words in total
vs. 1-7	<b>46</b> words, with <b>23</b> before, and <b>23</b> after atnach
vs. 7-9	<b>23</b> words in total
vs. 9-11	<b>23</b> words in total
vs. 1-14	<b>46</b> (2 x <b>23</b> ) words after atnach
vs. 6-16	<b>46</b> (2 x <b>23</b> ) words before atnach, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 12-17	<b>23</b> words after atnach
vs. 11-17	<b>32</b> words in the <i>kebod</i> YHWH formula, <b>58 = 32 + 26</b>
vs. 12-18	<b>32</b> words in the <i>kebod</i> YHWH formula, <b>58 = 32 + 26</b>
vs. 14-19	<b>23</b> words after atnach
vs. 10-20	<b>46</b> (2 x <b>23</b> ) words before atnach, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 11-21	<b>46</b> (2 x <b>23</b> ) words before atnach, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 16-21	<b>46</b> words, with <b>23</b> before, and <b>23</b> after atnach
vs. 12-22	<b>46</b> (2 x <b>23</b> ) words before atnach, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 21-23	<b>23</b> words in total
vs. 1-5	<b>17</b> words after atnach
vs. 4-6	<b>17</b> words in total
vs. 3-7	<b>17</b> words before atnach
vs. 1-8	<b>52</b> words in total, with <b>26</b> before and <b>26</b> after atnach
vs. 1-10	<b>68</b> words in total, with <b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) before and <b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) after atnach
vs. 14-15	<b>17</b> words in total
vs. 9-12	<b>17</b> words before atnach
vs. 9-13	<b>17</b> words after atnach
vs. 1-14	<b>52</b> (2 x <b>26</b> ) words before atnach
vs. 14-15	<b>17</b> words in total
vs. 8-15	<b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) words before atnach
vs. 13-16	<b>17</b> words after atnach
vs. 6-16	<b>85</b> (5 x <b>17</b> ) words in total, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 12-17	<b>51</b> (3 x <b>17</b> ) words in total
vs. 11-17	<b>26</b> words after atnach, in the <i>kebod</i> YHWH formula, <b>58 = 32 + 26</b>
vs. 12-18	<b>26</b> words after atnach, in the <i>kebod</i> YHWH formula, <b>58 = 32 + 26</b>
vs. 14-19	<b>26</b> words before atnach
vs. 10-19	<b>78</b> (3 x <b>26</b> ) words in total
vs. 10-20	<b>85</b> (5 x <b>17</b> ) words in total, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 11-21	<b>85</b> (5 x <b>17</b> ) words in total, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 1-21	<b>153</b> (9 x <b>17</b> ) words in total
vs. 18-22	<b>34</b> (2 x <b>17</b> ) words in total
vs. 12-22	<b>85</b> (5 x <b>17</b> ) words in total, in the formula <b>85 = 46 + 39</b>
vs. 20-23	<b>17</b> words before atnach
vs. 12-23	<b>52</b> (2 x <b>26</b> ) words before atnach
vs. 12-23	<b>52</b> (2 x <b>26</b> ) words in total spoken about God (Column d).
vs. 20-23	<b>17</b> words before atnach
vs. 12-23	<b>52</b> (2 x <b>26</b> ) words before atnach

4. There are 11 occurrences of the name יהוה (9x YHWH and 2x YH). The divine designation אלהים occurs in vs. 7, 22 and 23, while אל is to be found only in v. 1a and b.

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