

Psalm 108:1–14

[Cf. Pss. 57:8–11 and 60:4–12]

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Prayer: In My Praise of YHWH I Shall Awaken the Dawn

Ps 108:1–14

I. Vow to Praise YHWH among the Nations (108:1–4)

A. *My Heart Is Ready—I Will Sing Praise and Celebrate* (108:1–2)

[4.3]

108:1	A song / a psalm of David //	<u> 10 2_</u>	<u> 3 3 0</u>
		107:42–108:1	17 10 7
108:2	Ready is my heart / ^a O God //	<u> 12 2</u>	<u> 3 3 0</u>
		107:41–108:2a	26 16 10
	I will sing / ^b	<u> 6 1_</u>	<u> 1 0 1</u>
		107:38–108:b	46 25 21
	And I will celebrate /	<u> 6 1_</u>	<u> 1 0 1</u>
			60 32 28
	It is my glory //	<u> 6 1</u>	<u> 2 0 2</u>
		107:43–108:2	17 10 7

B. *With Musical Instruments I will Praise You among the Nations* (108:3–4)

[3.4]

108:3	Awake / my lute and my cither /	12 2	3 3 0
	I shall awaken the dawn //	<u> 9 1_</u>	<u> 2 2 0</u>
		107:37–108:3	61 34 27
108:4	I will praise you among the peoples / O YHWH //	13 2	3 3 0
	and I will celebrate you / ^a among the nations ^a //	<u> 9 2</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		107:41–108:4	41 24 17

II. Prayer Grounded in God's Covenant-Love and Spoken Word (108:5–10)

C. *Your Covenant-Love Is Great—Save Us with Your Right Hand!* (108:5–7)

[7.4]

108:5	For great above the heavens / ^a is your covenant-love //	16 2	5 5 0
	and unto the skies is your faithfulness //	<u> 11 1_</u>	<u> 3 0 3</u>
		108:2–5	26 16 10
108:6	Be exalted above the heavens / ^a O God //	13 2	4 4 0
	and over all the earth / ^b be your glory //	<u> 13 2</u>	<u> 4 0 4</u>
		108:3–6	27 17 10

108:7 Let them be delivered / your beloved (people) //

	16 2	3 3 0
	108:1-7a	40 26 14

Save with your right hand / answer me //

	16 2	3 0 3
	108:1-7	43 26 17

D. God Has Spoken: "I Will Divide Up Shechem!" (108:8) [2.2]

108:8 As for God / he has spoken in his holiness /

	11 2	3 3 0
	108:6-8a	17 10 7

I will exult (and) I will divide up Shechem //

	11 1	3 3 0
	108:3-8b	39 26 13

And the valley of Succoth I will survey //

	11 1	3 0 3
	108:6-8	23 13 10

E. God's Rule Includes Judah, Ephraim, Moab, Edom and Philistia (108:10) [4.7]

108:9 Gilead is mine / Manasseh is mine /

	10 2	4 4 0
		27 17 10

And Ephraim / is a helmet for my head //

	12 2	3 3 0
	107:43-108:9b	66 43 23

Judah / is my scepter //

	11 2	2 0 2
	108:6-9	32 20 12

108:10 Moab / is the basin for my ablutions /

	9 2	3 3 0
		35 23 12

Upon Edom^a I shall cast my sandal //

	11 1	4 4 0
	108:7-10B	31 23 8

Over Philistia / I shall shout with joy //

	11 2	3 0 3
	108:7-10	34 23 11

III. An Appeal for Edom's Defeat (108:11-14)

F. O God, Will You Not March with Us against Edom? (108:11-12) [3.4]

108:11 Who will bring me / to the fortified city? //

	15 2	4 4 0
	Who can lead me to Edom? //	4 0 4
	_11 1	4 0 4
	108:4-11	64 39 25

108:12 Will it be (you), O God? /

	8 1	2 2 0
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108:1–12a		81	52	29
	You have rejected us //	6	1	1 1 0
	will you not march out, O God / with our forces? //	<u>20</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
108:9–12		34	21	13

G. Come and Help Us for with God We will Trample Our Foes (108:13–14) [3.4]

108:13	Come to us (with) help against the foe //	13	1	4	4	0
	for useless / is human help //	<u>11</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
108:10–13		32	18	14		
108:14	With God / ^a we shall do works of valor //	12	2	3	3	0
	and it is he / who will trample (over) our foes //	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
108:5–14				78	46	32
108:1–14				99	60	39

Scansion in Accentual Stress Units: (4.3).(3.4) . (7.4).(2.2).(4.7) . (4.3).(3.4)
 (7 + 7) + (11 + 4 + 11) + (7 + 7) = 14 + **26** + 14 = 54
 or: 40 // 40

Concentric Compositional Formula: 99 = 49 + 1 + 49 [word count—with heading]
 or: 50 // 50 [with pivot counted in each half]

Notes:

- 108:2^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 108:2^b Reading the *tarḥa* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 108:4^{a-a} Reading the anomalous *bal-ʿummîm* (“among the nations”) in BHS as a single word with Letteris and Ginsburg. See also Pss 44:15; 57:10 and 149:7.
- 108:5^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* together with two occurrences of *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
- 108:6^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 108:6^b Reading the sequence of *tarḥa* followed immediately by *munaḥ* in BHS as disjunctive.
- 108:10^a Reading the *dəḥî* here in BHS as conjunctive.
- 108:14^a Reading the *tarḥa* preceded immediately by *gaʿya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 108 has seven strophes: 108:1–2, 3–4, 5–7, 8, 9–10, 11–12 and 13–14.

A	108:1–2a	balanced dyad:	[10 + 12]	= 10 + 12	morae
	108:2b–d	balanced triad:	[6 + 6 + 6]	= 6 + 6 + 6	morae
B	108:3–4	2 balanced dyads:	[12 + 9] + [13 + 8]	= 21 + 21	morae
C	108:5–6	2 balanced dyads:	[16 + 11] + [13 + 13]	= 27 + 26	morae
	108:7	balanced dyad:	[16 + 16]	= 16 + 16	morae

X	108:8	balanced triad:	[11 + 11 + 11]	= 11 + 11 + 11	morae
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C'	108:9–10	3 balanced dyads:	[10 + 12] + [11 + 9] + [11 + 11]	= 22 + 20 + 22	morae
B'	108:11–12	2 balanced dyads + pivot:	[15 + 11] + 8 + [6 + 20]	= 26 + 8 + 26	morae
A'	108:13–14	2 balanced dyads:	[13 + 11] + [12 + 13]	= 24 + 25	morae

- The first strophe (108:1–2) has two parts arranged in five subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:1, 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d.
 - 107:42–108:1 **17** words
 - 107:43–108:2 **17** words
- The second strophe (108:3–4) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:3 and 4.
 - 107:37–108:3 **34** (= **17** x 2) words
 - 107:41–108:4 **17** words after *atnach*
- The third strophe (108:5–7) has two parts arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:5, 6, 7a and 7b.
 - 108:2–5 **26** words
 - 108:3–6 **17** words before *atnach*
 - 108:1–7 **43 = 26 + 17** [compositional formula]
- The fourth strophe (108:8) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:8a, 8b and 8c.
 - 108:6–8 **23** words
 - 108:3–8 **26** words before *atnach*
 - 108:1–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words before *atnach*
- The fifth strophe (108:9–10) is a single part arranged in six subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:9a, 9b, 9c, 10a, 10b and 10c.
 - 108:6–9 **32** (= 2x2x2x2x2) words
 - 108:7–10 **34** (= 2x17) words and **23** words before *atnach*
 - 108:1–10 **46** (= 2x23) words before *atnach*

6. The sixth strophe (108:11–12) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:11, 12a and 12bc.
- 108:4–11 **64** (= **32** x 2) words
 - 108:9–12 **34** (= **17** x 2) words
 - 108:5–12 **65 = 39 + 26** [compositional formula—all three divisible by 13]
7. The seventh strophe (108:13–14) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 108:13 and 14.
- 108:10–14 **17** words after *atnach*
 - 108:8–14 **34** (= 2x17) words before *atnach*
 - 108:5–14 **78 = 46 + 32** [compositional formula]

Observations

1. The seven strophes in Psalm 108 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, which is determined primarily on prosodic grounds, as follows:
- | | | | |
|----|--|-------|-----------|
| A | My heart is ready—I will sing praise and celebrate | [3.3] | 108:1–2 |
| B | With musical instruments I praise you among the nations | [3.4] | 108:3–4 |
| C | Your covenant-love is great—be exalted, O God! | [7.4] | 108:5–6 |
| X | Deliver your people according to your spoken word | [2.2] | 108:7–9 |
| C' | God's rule includes Moab, Edom and Philistia | [4.7] | 108:10 |
| B' | O God, will you not march with us to Edom? | [4.3] | 108:11–12 |
| A' | Come and help us for with God we will trample our foes | [3.3] | 108:13–14 |
2. Psalm 108 [= 2x2x3x3x3] is a copy of Pss 57:8–11 and 60:4–12, with some alterations.
3. In terms of the 99 words in Psalm 108, the **arithmological center** falls on the word **ועמק** (“and the valley”) in 108:8b. The initial **concentric compositional formula** is:

$$99 = 49 + 1 + 49 \quad [\text{word count—with heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 50 // 50 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

$$\{49 = 7 \times 7 = 17 + 32 = 23 + 26\}$$

The **meaningful center** is found by adding two words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

אחלקה שכם	I will divide up Shechem;
סכות אמרד ועמק	And the valley of Succoth I will survey.

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$99 = 47 + 5 + 47 \quad [\text{word count—with heading}]$$

$$\text{or: } 52 // 52 \quad [\text{word count—with “pivot” included in each half}]$$

$$\{52 = 26 \times 2\}$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded by including five words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

- | | | |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 8 | דבר בקדשו | He has spoken in his holiness: |
| | אעלזה אחלקה שכם | "I will exult, I will divide Shechem; |
| | ועמק סכות אמדר | And the valley of Succoth I will survey. |
| 9 | לי גלעד לי מנשה | Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; |

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$99 = 44 + 11 + 44 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 55 // 55 \quad \text{[word count—with "pivot" included in each half]}$$

$$\{55 = 23 + 32\}$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded further to include nine words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 8 | הושיעה ימינך וענני | Save with your right hand, answer me. |
| | אלהים דבר בקדשו | God has spoken in his holiness: |
| | אעלזה אחלקה שכם | "I will exult, I will divide Shechem; |
| | ועמק סכות אמדר | And the valley of Succoth I will survey. |
| 9 | לי גלעד לי מנשה | Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; |
| | ואפרים מעוז ראשי | And Ephraim is a helmet for my head; |

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$99 = 40 + 19 + 40 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 59 // 59 \quad \text{[word count—with "pivot" included in each half]}$$

The **meaningful center** may be expanded further yet to include eleven words on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|
| 7 | יחלצון ידידיך | May your beloved (people) be delivered; |
| | הושיעה ימינך וענני | Save with your right hand, answer me. |
| 8 | אלהים דבר בקדשו | God has spoken in his holiness: |
| | אעלזה אחלקה שכם | "I will exult, I will divide Shechem; |
| | ועמק סכות אמדר | And the valley of Succoth I will survey. |
| 9 | לי גלעד לי מנשה | Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; |
| | ואפרים מעוז ראשי | And Ephraim is a helmet for my head; |
| | יהודה מחקקי | Judah is my scepter. |

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$99 = 38 + 23 + 38 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 61 // 61 \quad \text{[word count—with "pivot" included in each half]}$$

4. The 13-word “nested framework” (with the 6-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

1	<u>שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד</u>	<u>A song, a psalm belonging to David.</u>
2	<u>נִכּוֹן לִבִּי אֱלֹהִים</u>	<u>Ready is my heart, O God.</u>
	אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמְרָה אֶף־כְּבוֹדִי	I will sing and I will celebrate; it is my glory.
3	עוֹרָה הַנֶּבֶל וְכִנּוֹר	Awake my lute and my cither.
13	הִבֵּה־לָנוּ עֲזֵרַת מִצָּר	Come to us (with) help against the foe;
	וְשׁוֹא תְשׁוּעַת אָדָם	For useless is human help.
14	<u>בְּאֱלֹהִים נַעֲשֶׂה־חֵיל</u>	<u>With God we shall do works of valor;</u>
	<u>וְהוּא יְבוֹס צְרִינּוּ</u>	<u>And it is he who will trample (over) our foes.</u>

5. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

99	= 47 + 5 + 47	or: 52 // 52	word-count
99	= 44 + 11 + 44	or: 55 // 55	
{with others in between}			
99	= 13 + 73 + 13	or: 86 // 86	vv. 1–3a vv. 13–14
99	= 6 + 87 + 6	or: 93 // 93	v. 1–2a v. 14
54	= 14 + 26 + 14	or: 40 // 40	SAS units
	{54 = 2x3x3x3; and 40 = 17 + 23 }		
31	= 8 + 15 + 8	or: 23 // 23	briques (SAS units)

6. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 108, the basic building blocks (**briques**) in each poetic **verset** are the **primary SAS (syntactic accentual stress) units**. These sub-units are delineated by the Masoretes, who marked most of the boundaries with one of the following:

- **Soph Pasuq** A large colon following a word signifies the end of a verse, which does not always coincide with the end of a sentence.
- **Atnach** A small caret-like mark (like ^) beneath the consonantal text, pointing upward, is used to divide most verses. Its primary importance for our purposes concerns its use in the matter of numerical composition—i.e., the total word-count in each line is divided into the number of words before and after *atnach*.
- **Ole Weyored** A combination of two accentual signs: a caret-like mark above the consonantal text, pointing to the left, used together with the accent *merka* (an upright line beneath the consonantal text slanting to the right). These two marks usually appear on the same word, but when that word is monosyllabic the *merka* falls on the following word. This

major divider is usually considered to be a stronger disjunctive accent than *atnach*.

In the prosodic analysis presented in the translation (above), the presence of these three markers is indicated with a double slash (//). Psalm 108 has 31 **briques** (primary SAS units), 26 of which are marked by *soph pasuq* (14 times, at the end of each verse) and *atnach* (12 times, in each verse except 1 and 3). The remaining five boundaries are marked by *revia* (5 times, in vv. 2, 3, 8, 9 and 10).

7. The prosodic structure of Psalm 108, in terms of its **primary syntactic accentual stress units (briques)**, may be displayed as follows: [^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and † represents other accents]:

I	A	1	<i>šîr mizmôr ləḏāwīd :</i> <i>ʔāšîrāh waʔāzammərāh †</i>	2	<i>nākôn libbî ʔēlōhîm ^</i> <i>ʔāp kəḇōḏî :</i>
	B	3	<i>ʕîrāh hannēḇel wəḵinnôr †</i> <i>ʔōḏəḵa ḇāʕammîm yhw̄h ^</i>	4	<i>ʔāʕîrāh šāḥar :</i> <i>waʔāzammerḵa bal-ʔummîm :</i>

II	C	5	<i>kî ḡādōl mēʕal šāmayim ḥasḏəḵa ^</i> <i>rûmāh ʕal šāmayim ʔēlōhîm ^</i> <i>ləmaʕan yēḥāləṣûn yəḏîḏəḵa ^</i>	6	<i>wəʕad šəḥāqîm ʔāmitteḵa :</i> <i>wəʕal ḵol hāʔāreṣ kəḇōḏəḵa :</i> <i>hōšîʕāh yəḡmînəḵa waʕānēnî :</i>
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X	8	<i>ʔēlōhîm dibber ḇəqoḏšō †</i> <i>wəʕēmeq sukḵōt ʔāmadəd :</i>	9	<i>ʔeʕōzāh ʔāḥalləqāh šəḵem ^</i>
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C'	9	<i>lî ḡîlʕād lî mənāššeh †</i> <i>yəḥûḏāh məḥōqəqî :</i> <i>ʔəḏôm ʔāšlîḵ naʕālf ^</i>	10	<i>ʔəḇrayim māʕōz rōʔšî ^</i> <i>mōʔāḇ sîr raḥšî †</i> <i>ʕālê ḇəlešet ʔetrôʕā :</i>
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III	B'	11	<i>mî yōḇîlênî ʕîr miḇšār ^</i> <i>ḥālōʔ ʔēlōhîm zənaḥtānû ^</i>	12	<i>mî nāḥanî ʕad ʔəḏôm :</i> <i>wəlōʔ tēšēʔ ʔēlōhîm ḇəṣîḇʔōtēnû :</i>
	A'	13	<i>ḥāḇāh lānû ʕezrāh miššār ^</i> <i>ḇēʔlōhîm naʕāseh ḥāyil ^</i>	14	<i>wəšāwʔ tšûʕat ʔādām :</i> <i>wəḥûʔ yāḇûs šārēnû :</i>

8. The 31 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in 7 strophes in Psalm 108 as follows: 31 = (4 + 4) + (6 + 3 + 6) + (4 + 4) = 8 + 15 + 8; or **23 // 23** with the central pivot included in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 108 falls on the word wə'ēmeq (“and the valley”) in 108:8, with 49 words on either side. Psalm 108 has 54 SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units, 31 **briques** (primary SAS units), 15 versets, 7 strophes, and 3 cantos. The **arithmological center** is in the middle strophe, the middle verset, the middle three **briques**, and the middle two SAS units.

9. Terrien finds two major parts, which are divided into five subsections in Psalm 108 (*The Psalms* (2003), p. 740–41. Schildenberger (1960) finds a similar structure of 5 strophic units in 2 major parts (cantos). The analysis presented here, which is based on the balance in mora-count and the concentric pattern in the distribution of syntactic accentual stress units, suggests that there are seven **strophes** (arranged in 3 cantos: vv. 1–4, 5–10 and 11–14).

Christensen	Terrien	Schildenberger	Auffret
I A 108:1–2	Heading (v. 1)	Heading (v. 1)	Heading (v. 1)
B 108:3–4	I 1 108:2–4	I 1 108:2–4	1 108:2–6
II C 108:5–7	2 108:5–7	2 108:5–7	2 108:7
X 108:8	II 3 108:8–10	II 3 108:8–10	3 108:8–11
C' 108:9–10			
III B' 108:11–12	4 108:11–12	4 108:11–13	4 108:12–14
A' 108:13–14	5 108:13–14	5 108:14	

The primary difference in terms of strophic structure results from the fact that others do not recognize the concentric structure of Psalm 108 and do not locate the **meaningful center** because they assume a linear structure and ignore the heading (v. 1).

10. The logoprosodic analysis indicates that, for purposes of word-count in the final edition of the Psalter as we now have it, the anomalous *bal-ʿummîm* (“among the nations”) in 108:4 is to be read as two words as in Codex L (cf. Pss 44:15; 57:10 and 149:7) and not a single word with Letteris and Ginsburg.
11. Note the following list of significant compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

108:1–6 **23** words before *atnach*
 108:1–7 **43 = 26 + 17** [compositional formula]
 108:1–8 **52** (= **26** x 2) words and **32** words before *atnach*
 108:1–10 **46** (= **23** x 2) words before *atnach*

It is not possible to utilize one of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of verse 4, which leaves 11 possible boundaries to work with. In 4 out of 11 of these boundaries (or 36.4% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present.

12. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 108 as a whole calls for input on the part of others in the BIBAL Forum, as we consider the rhetorical features in greater depth and further information contained in the *te'amim* of this particular text.

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