

Psalm 112:1–10

Translation, Logoprosodic Analysis, and Observations

Wisdom Psalm: The Happiness of the Righteous Person Ps 112:1–10

A. *Happy Is the One Who Fears YHWH and Obeys His Commands* (112:1–2a) [2.4]

112:1	Praise Yah! (<i>Hallelujah</i>) /	<u>6 1</u>	<u>2 2 0</u>
		111:7–112:1a	35 23 12
	𐤒 Happy is the person ^a who fears YHWH //	<u>14 1</u>	<u>5 5 0</u>
		111:6–112:1b	48 32 16
	𐤑 In his commandments / he delights greatly //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		111:6–112:1	51 32 19
112:2	𐤑 Powerful in the land / will be his descendants //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		111:9–112:2a	34 25 9

B. *The Upright Are Blessed with Wealth and Righteousness* (112:2b–3) [2.4]

	𐤓 The circle of the upright / shall be blessed //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		112:1–2	17 11 6
112:3	𐤓 Wealth and riches ^a will be in his house //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 3 0</u>
		111:8–112:3a	46 31 15
	𐤓 And his righteousness / endures forever //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		112:1–3	23 14 9

C. *The Upright are Merciful—It Is Good to Lend Freely* (112:4–5) [4.4]

112:4	𐤓 Light rises in the darkness / for the upright //	<u>15 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		112:2–4a	17 11 6
	𐤓 (He is) merciful and compassionate / and just //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		111:8–112:4	41 26 15
112:5	𐤓 It is good for a person / to lend freely //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>4 4 0</u>
		112:3–5a	17 11 6
	𐤓 He conducts his affairs / with discretion //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
		111:5–112:5	84 50 34

D. He Remains Steadfast and is Remembered Forever as Righteous (112:6) [2.2]

112:6	כ	Surely it is forever / ^a he shall not be moved //	_12 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
			112:1-6a	41 26 15
	ל	So as to be remembered forever / as righteous //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
			112:1-6	45 26 19

E. He Does Not Fear Bad News for He Trusts in YHWH (112:7-8) [4.4]

112:7	נ	Of evil tidings / he will not be afraid //	_16 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
			112:4-7a	26 16 10
	נ	His heart is fixed / trusting in YHWH //	<u>16 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
			112:5-7	23 12 11
112:8	ב	With a firm heart / he fears nothing //	_13 2_	<u>4 4 0</u>
			112:3-8a	42 23 19
	ב	As he looks down / ^a on his enemies //	<u>11 2</u>	<u>4 0 4</u>
			112:3-8	46 23 23

F. He Gives Generously to the Poor—His Horn is Raised in Honor (112:9) [4.2]

112:9	ב	He gives lavishly / to the poor /	_12 2_	<u>3 3 0</u>
			112:5-9a	34 19 15
	נ	His righteousness / shall last forever //	_12 2_	<u>3 3 0</u>
			112:4-9b	44 26 18
	ק	His horn / is raised in honor //	<u>12 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
			112:8-9	17 10 7

G. Though Evil People Are Enraged Their Desires Come to Naught (112:10) [4.2]

112:10	ר	The evil person sees it / and he is enraged /	_11 2_	<u>3 3 0</u>
			112:7-10a	28 17 11
	ש	His teeth he gnashes / ^a and he collapses //	_12 2_	<u>3 3 0</u>
			112:8-10b	23 16 7
	ת	The desires of evil people / ^b come to naught //	<u>13 2</u>	<u>3 0 3</u>
			112:8-10	26 16 10
			112:1-10	79 49 30

Scansion in SAS Units: (2.4).(2.4) . (4.4).(2.2).(4.4) . (4.2).(4.2)

$$(6 + 6) + (8 + 4 + 8) + (6 + 6) = 12 + 20 + 12 = 44$$

or: **32 // 32** {with pivot counted in each half}

Concentric Compositional Formula: 79 = 39 + 1 + 39 or: 40 // 40 [word count—with heading]
 {39 = 13 x 3 and 40 = 17+23 = 26+14 = 2x2x2x5}

Notes:

- 112:1^a Reading *dəḥî* in BHS as conjunctive.
- 112:3^a Reading the *mêrəkâ* here in BHS as disjunctive.
- 112:6^a Reading the *mêrəkâ* preceded immediately by *ga'ya* (= *meteg*) in BHS as disjunctive.
- 112:8^a Reading the sequence of *tarḥâ* followed by *munaḥ* together in BHS as disjunctive.
- 112:10^a Reading the sequence of two successive occurrences of *munaḥ* together with *ga'ya* (= *meteg*) in Letteris as disjunctive; BHS omits *ga'ya* (= *meteg*).

Summary of the Logoprosodic Analysis

1. Psalm 112 has seven strophes: 112:1, 2–3, 4–5, 6, 7–8, 9–10a and 10bc.

A	112:1–2a	{the 2-word rubric “Hallelu-Yah” stands outside the prosodic structure of the psalm itself}			
		balanced triad:	[14 + 13 + 13]	= 14 + 13 + 13	morae
B	112:2b–3	balanced triad:	[12 + 12 + 13]	= 12 + 12 + 13	morae
C	112:4–5	2 balanced dyads:	[15 + 11] + [12 + 13]	= 26 + 25	morae
X	112:6	dyad:	[15 + 16]	= 15 + 16	morae
C'	112:7	balanced dyad:	[16 + 16]	= 16 + 16	morae
	112:8	balanced dyad:	[13 + 11]	= 13 + 11	morae
B'	112:9	balanced triad:	[12 + 12 + 12]	= 12 + 12 + 12	morae
A'	112:10	balanced triad:	[11 + 12 + 13]	= 11 + 12 + 13	morae

2. The first strophe (112:1–2a) has two parts arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:1a, 1b, 1c and 2a.
 - 111:6–112:1 **51** (= 17 x 3) words and **32** words before *atnach*
3. The second strophe (112:2b–3) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:2b, 3a and 3b.
 - 112:1–2 **17** words
 - 112:1–3 **23** words
4. The third strophe (112:4–5) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:4a, 4b, 5a and 5b.
 - 111:8–112:4 **26** words before *atnach*
 - 111:5–112:5 **34** (= 17 x 2) words after *atnach*
5. The fourth strophe (112:6) is a single part arranged in two subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:6a and 6b.
 - 112:1–6 **26** words before *atnach*

6. The fifth strophe (112:7–8) is a single part arranged in four subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:7a, 7b, 8a and 8b.
 - 112:5–7 **23** words
 - 112:2–7 **23** words before *atnach*
 - 112:1–7 **23** words after *atnach*
 - 112:3–8 **26** words before *atnach*
7. The sixth strophe (112:9) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:9a, 9b, 10a and 10b.
 - 112:8–9 **17** words
 - 112:7–10a **17** words before *atnach*
8. The seventh strophe (112:10) is a single part arranged in three subdivisions on the basis of word-count: 112:9–10 at the same time.
 - 112:8–10 **26** (= 2x13) words

Observations

1. The seven strophes in Psalm 112 may be outlined in a menorah pattern, as follows:

A	Happy is the one who fears YHWH and obeys his commands	נבא	[2.4] 112:1–2a
B	The upright will be blessed with wealth and righteousness	והר	[2.4] 112:2b–3
C	The upright are merciful—it is good to lend freely	יטחז	[4.4] 112:4–5
X	He remains steadfast and is remembered as righteous	לכ	[2.2] 112:6
C'	He does not fear bad news for he trusts in YHWH	עסנמ	[4.4] 112:7–8
B'	He gives generously to the poor—his horn is raised in honor	קצפ	[4.2] 112:9
A'	The evil person is enraged but his desires come to naught	תשר	[4.2] 112:10

2. Psalm 112 is a structural twin to Psalm 111. In fact, Terrien sees these two psalms as identical in their strophic structure and states explicitly that “Probably Psalm 112 was meant to be a sequel to Psalm 111” (*The Psalms* [2003], pp. 759–61—see Observation 7 below).

The final three verses are arranged to reveal the two divine-name numbers:

112:8–9 **17** words
 112:8–10 **26** words

3. In terms of the 79 words in Psalm 112, the **arithmological center** falls on the word לֹא (“not”) in the first half of verse 6. The initial **concentric compositional formula** is:

79 = 39 + 1 + 39 [word count—with heading]
 or: 40 // 40 [word count—with “pivot” included in each half]

One candidate for the **meaningful center** is found by including one word on either side of this **arithmological center**, as follows:

לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִמוּט It is forever, he shall not be moved.

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$79 = 38 + 3 + 38 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 41 // 41 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

The **meaningful center** can be enlarged by including five words on either side of the **arithmological center**, as follows:

יְכַלְכֵּל דְּבָרָיו בְּמִשְׁפָּט He conducts his affairs with discretion;
 כִּי לְעוֹלָם לֹא יִמוּט Surely it is forever (and) he shall not be moved,
 לְזִכָּר עוֹלָם יִהְיֶה צְדִיק So as to be remembered forever as righteous.

The corresponding **compositional formula** then becomes:

$$79 = 34 + 11 + 34 \quad \text{[word count—with heading]}$$

$$\text{or: } 45 // 45 \quad \text{[word count—with “pivot” included in each half]}$$

$$\{34 = 17 \times 2\}$$

Since this formula includes the use of one of the two divine-name numbers, it is perhaps the more convincing of the above possibilities.

4. The 17-word “nested framework” (with the 9-word framework underlined) reads as follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | <u>הַלְלוּ יְהוָה</u> | <u>Hallelu-Yah</u> |
| | <u>אַשְׁרֵי-אִישׁ יִרָא אֶת-יְהוָה</u> | <u>Happy is the person who fears YHWH;</u> |
| | <u>בְּמִצְוֹתָיו חָפֵץ מְאֹד</u> | <u>In his commandments he delights greatly.</u> |
| 2 | גִּבּוֹר בְּאֶרֶץ יִהְיֶה זְרַעוֹ | Powerful in the land will be his descendants; |
| | דּוֹר יִשְׁרָיִם יִבְרָךְ | The generation of the upright shall be blessed. |
| 9 | נָתַן לְאֲבִיּוֹנִים | He gave to the poor |
| | צְדִיקְתּוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד | His righteousness shall last forever. |
| | קִרְנוֹ תְרוּם בְּכִבּוֹד | His horn is raised in honor. |
| 10 | <u>רָשָׁע יִרְאֶה וְכָעַס</u> | <u>(As for) the evil person, he sees it and he is enraged;</u> |
| | <u>שָׁנָיו יִחַרְק וְכָמַס</u> | <u>His teeth he gnashes and he collapses.</u> |
| | <u>תַּאֲוַת רָשָׁעִים תֵּאֱבֹד</u> | <u>The desires of evil people come to naught.</u> |

5. Summary of the concentric compositional formulae:

$$79 = 38 + 3 + 38 \quad \text{or: } 41 // 41 \quad \text{word-count}$$

$$79 = 34 + 11 + 34 \quad \text{or: } 45 // 45$$

{with others in between}

79 = 17 + 45 + 17 or: 62 // 62

79 = 9 + 58 + 9 or: 66 // 66

44 = 12 + 20 + 12 or: 32 // 32 SAS (syntactic accentual-stress) units
{44 = 2x2x11}

23 = 6 + 11 + 6 or: 17 // 17 **briques** (primary SAS units)

6. In the prosodic structure of Psalm 112, 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 112 has **23 briques** (primary SAS units), of which 20 are marked by *soph pasuq* (10 times, at the end of each verse), *atnach* (10 times, in each verse). The boundaries of the remaining three **briques** are marked by *rəḥîa^c* (2 times, in vv. 9 and 10) and *rəḥîa^c muḡraš* (v. 6).

7. The prosodic structure of Psalm 112, in terms of its primary SAS units (**briques**), may be displayed as follows [^ represents *atnach*; : represents *soph pasuq*; † represents *ole weyored*, and † represents all other accent markers]: as follows:

- I A ¹ *haləlû yāh ʾašrē ʾiš yārēʾ ʾet yhw^h ^* *bəmišwōṭāyw ḥāpēs məʾōd :*
² *gibbôr bāʾāreš yhw^h yihyeh zar^c ^*
- B *dôr yašārîm yaḥōrāk :* ³ *hôn wāʾōher bəḥêṭô ^*
wəšidqātô ʿōmedet lāʿad :
- II C ⁴ *zārah baḥōšek ʾôr laysārîm ^* *ḥannûn wərahûm wəšaddîq :*
⁵ *ṭôḥ ʾiš ḥônēn ûmalweh ^* *yaḥkalkēl dəḥārāyw bəmišpāt :*

X ⁶ <i>kî lə'ólām</i> lō' <i>yimmôṭ</i> ^	<i>ləzēker</i> 'ólām †	<i>yihyeh yimmôṭ</i> :
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C' ⁷ *miššəmə'āh rā'āh lō' yîrā' ^ *nāḵôn libbô bātūah ba-yhwh* :*

⁸ *sāmûḵ libbô lō' yîrā' ^ 'ad 'āšer yir'eh bəšāryw :*

III B' ⁹ *pizzar nātan lā'ebyônîm* † *šidqāṭô ômedet lā'ad* ^

qarnô tārûm bəḵābôḏ :

A' ¹⁰ *rāšā' yir'eh wəḵā'ās* † *šinnāyw yaḥrōq wənāmās* ^

ta'āwat rəšā'im tō'bēd :

8. The 22 **briques** (primary SAS units) are distributed in 3 **strophes** in Psalm 112 as follows: **23** = (3 + 3) + (4 + 3 + 4) + (3 + 3) = 6 + 11 + 6; or **17 // 17** with the central pivot (verse 6) included in each half.

The **arithmological center** of Psalm 112 falls on the word lō' (“not”) in 112:6a, with 37 words on either side. Psalm 112 has 46 SAS units, 23 **briques** (primary SAS units), 9 **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. There are 285 morae in Psalm 112—with 141 mora before the word lō' (“not”) in 112:6a and 142 morae after it.

9. Terrien finds two main sections (= **cantos**) subdivided in four parts (= **strophes**) in Psalm 112 (*The Psalms* [2003], p. 759.) The analysis presented here, which is based on balance in mora-count and the concentric pattern in the distribution of SAS units, indicates that there are seven **strophes** arranged in 3 cantos (vv. 1–3, 4–8 and 9–10).

Christensen	Terrien
I A 112:1–2a	I 1 112:1–3
B 112:2b–3	
II C 112:4–5	2 112:4–5
X 112:6	
C' 112:7–8	II 3 112:6–8
III B' 112:9	4 112:9–10
A' 112:10	

The difference in terms of strophic structure in our respective analyses results from the fact that Terrien assumes that the strophic structure of Psalm 112 is identical to that of Psalm 111; and he does not locate the **meaningful center** and does not observe the symmetrical inverse structural pattern of Psalm 112 as a whole.

10. {Add section discussing alphabetic acrostics in the Psalter in relation to the work of David Noel Freedman}

11. Note the following list of significant compositional numbers at the boundaries of the verses counting from the beginning:

112:1–2	17	words	
112:1–3	23	words	
112:1–6	26	words before <i>atnach</i>	
112:1–7	23	words after <i>atnach</i>	
112:1–8	34	(= 17 x 2) words before <i>atnach</i>	
112:1–9	70	words and 40 words before <i>atnach</i>	[40 = 17 + 23]
112:1–10	49	words before <i>atnach</i>	[49 = 17 + 32 = 23 + 26]

It is not possible to utilize any of the four compositional numbers (**17**, **23**, **26** and **32**) until the end of verse 2, which leaves nine possible boundaries to work with. In 5 out of 9 of these boundaries (or more than 55% of the time) a multiple of one of these four compositional numbers is present. If the numbers **40** and **49** are included the percentage increases to more than 77%. This evidence suggests the possibility of deliberate design at the point of the numerical composition of Psalm 112.

12. Determining the details of the musical and literary structures of Psalm 112 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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