

# Hebrew Whiteboard

**Biblical Hebrew and the Psalms**

**Psalm 104**

# Objectives

- 1. Identify verse structure by means of major disjunctive accents.**
- 2. Display verse structure by means of logical line diagramming.**
- 3. Interpret verse structure.**
- 4. Identify grammatical elements and poetic devices.**
- 5. Interpret poetic device function(s).**
- 6. Identify the psalm's structure.**

# Psalm 104:1

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

topical *rebia'*

'*oleh-veyored* = primary disjunctive accent in this verse

*tipchah* = secondary disjunctive

'*atnach* = secondary disjunctive in this verse

*silluq* = end of v. 1

1 בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יְהוָה

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי

גִּדְלָתָּ מַאֲד

הוֹד וְהַדָּר לְבָשֶׁת:

# Psalm 104:1

Adjust to display  
grammatical and  
parallel relationships.

Piel imperat. fs + vocative  
of address (noun + 1cs  
pron. suff.) + dir. obj.

1 בְּרַכֵּי נִפְשֵׁי אֶת־יְהוָה

Vocative of address + Qal perf.  
2ms, characteristic present.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גֹדְלֹת.

Adverb of intensity.

מְאֹד

Compound adverbial  
accusative, manner.

הוֹד וְהַדָּר

Qal perf. 2ms, characteristic present.

לְבַשְׂתָּ:



# Psalm 104:2

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

*tipchah* = secondary disjunctive

עֲזָה-אֹר 2

*'atnach* = primary disjunctive in this verse

כִּשְׁלֵמָה

*rebia' mugrash* = secondary disjunctive

נוֹטָה אֲשֶׁמִּים

*silluq* = end of v. 2

כִּירִיעָה:

# Psalm 104:2

Adjust to display  
grammatical and  
parallel relationships.

Qal act. ptcp. ms, characteristic.

עֲטֵה - 2

Adverbial accusative, instrument.

אֹר

Adverbial prep. phrase, comparison.

כַּשֵּׁלְמָה

Qal act. ptcp. ms, characteristic  
+ dir. obj.

נוֹטֵה לְמַיִם

Adverbial prep. phrase, comparison.

כַּיְרִיעָה:

# Psalm 104:3

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

*rebia'* = secondary disjunctive

3 הַמְקָרָה בַּמַּיִם

*'oleh-weyored* = primary disjunctive in this verse

עַל־אוֹתָיו

*'athnach* = secondary disjunctive in this verse

הַשָּׁם-עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ

*rebia' mugrash* = secondary disjunctive

הַמְהֵלֵךְ

*silluq* = end of v. 3

עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ:



# Psalm 104:3

Adjust to display  
grammatical and  
parallel relationships.

Piel ptcp. ms w/art.

הַמְקַרָּה 3

Adverbial prep. phrase, location.

בַּמַּיִם

Adverbial accusative,  
specification.

עַל־אֹתָיו

Qal act. ptcp. ms  
w/art. + dir. obj. +  
adverb. accus.,  
specification.

הַשָּׁם-עָבִים רְכוּבוֹ

Piel ptcp. ms w/art.

הַמְהַלֵּךְ

עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ:

Adverbial prep. phrase, location.



# Psalm 104:4

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

4 עֲשֵׂה מִלְּאֲכָיו רוּחֹת

*'atnach* = primary disjunctive in this verse

*rebia' mugrash* = secondary disjunctive

*silluq* = end of v. 4

מִשָּׁרְתָיו

אֵשׁ לֵהֵט:

# Psalm 104:4

Adjust to display  
grammatical and  
parallel relationships.

Qal act. ptcp. ms +  
dir. obj. w/3ms  
pron. suff. + accus.  
of specification.

רוּחֹת עֲשָׂה מֵאֲפָקָיו 4

Substantival Piel ptcp. mp (נשרת <)  
w/3ms pron. suff.; dir. obj.

בְּנִשְׂרָתָיו

אֵשׁ לֵהֵט:

Accus. of specification;  
nouns in construct,  
attributive genitive.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Translation

- 1** Bless YHWH, my soul.  
O YHWH, my God, You are very great;  
With majesty and splendor You are clothed—
- 2** Wrapped up *with* light as a mantle,  
Stretching out the heavens like a tent curtain.
- 3** He Who builds His upper rooms on beams over  
the water;  
Who appoints clouds as His chariot;  
Who walks upon the wings of the wind.
- 4** Making winds His messengers  
And His servants flaming fire.



# Psalm 104:1–4 — Translation

1 Bless YHWH, my soul.

O YHWH, my God, You are very great;  
With majesty and splendor **You are clothed**—

2 **Wrapped up** *with* light **as a mantle,**  
**Stretching out** the heavens **like a tent curtain.**

3 Who **built** **His upper rooms** on beams over the water;  
Who **appointed** clouds as **His chariot**;

Who **walks** upon the wings of the wind—

4 **Making** **His messengers** winds  
And **His servants** flaming fire.

Hymnic participles (red)

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Verse 1 repeats the inclusio marking off Ps 103:1, 22, linking the two psalms.
- “Bless” (II בָּרַךְ) = acknowledge YHWH in His position of power with all the respect due Him.
- Imperative of immediate desire basically equivalent to a future: “I will bless” (cf. J-M, §114*m*, *p*).
- “Soul” (נַפְשִׁי) in this context refers to the individual’s total being: mind, heart, and will = “I.”

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Vocative of address (יהוה אֱלֹהֵי) placed first, perhaps to form interior hinge with immediately preceding יהוה.
- Personal relationship expressed in אֱלֹהֵי, “my God.”
- Verb (גָּדַלְתָּ) is a static stative (expressing state of being) describing YHWH’s present characteristic state as “great.”
- Adverb מְאֹד (= “very” or “exceedingly”) modifies the preceding verb (גָּדַלְתָּ).



# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Adverbial accusative nouns הוֹד וְהָדָר (“with majesty and splendor”) precede the verb (לְבַשְׁתָּהּ) for emphasis forming internal hinge with preceding emphatic adverb מְאֹד.
- The two nouns could be taken as a hendiadys = “majestic splendor” (cf. *HBI*, §1.8.3a).
- Verse 2 has first (עֹשֶׂה) of six hymnic participles expressing either an adjectival characteristic (as this participle) or praiseworthy divine acts.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Adverbial accusative of means (אֹר, “with light”)—perhaps a reference to Day 1 (Gen 1:3–5).
- Adverbial prepositional phrase of comparison (כַּעֲלֵמָה, “as a mantle/garment”) modifying the participle “wrapped.”
- First of hymnic participles to be characteristic divine action (נוֹטֶה, “stretching out”)—potential correlation to concept of expanding universe.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Adverbial prepositional phrase of comparison (כַּיִרְיָעָה, “like a tent curtain”) parallel to the previous.
- Verse 3 begins with articular hymnic participle (הַמְקַרֵּה, “Who built on beams” or “Who built with wood”), from II קרה (a verb formed from the noun קוֹרֵה, “timberwork/beam”)—past by historical reference.
- Obvious imagery or metaphor—a major element in Hebrew poetry.



# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- The locative prepositional phrase **בַּמַּיִם** could be translated “on/in” or “over the waters”—perhaps a reference to Day 2 (Gen 1:6–8).
- “His upper rooms” (**עֲלֵיוֹתָיו**)—perhaps a reference to God’s heavenly throne room.
- The fourth hymnic participle is articular like the first in this verse: “Who appointed” (**הַשָּׂם**)—again past by historical reference.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- “Clouds as His chariot” (עָבִים רְכוּבוֹ) consists of a double accusative: second accusative of the produced thing following the direct object accusative (cf. J-M, §125w)—more poetic imagery.
- The fifth hymnic participle (הַמְהַלֵּךְ, “Who walks”) is also articular, like the other two participles in this verse.
- “Upon the wings of the wind” (עַל-כַּנְפֵי-רוּחַ) uses yet another metaphor for imagery.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- Verse 4 (like v. 2) starts with עֲשֶׂה (“making”), the final of the six hymnic participles in vv. 2–4.
- Double accusative (מִלְאָכָיו רוּחֹת) presents the accusative of the produced thing (the second accusative).
  - “Making His messengers winds” may refer to their speed of movement.
  - Construction does not mean “making winds His messengers”—contra Leupold, 732.

# Psalm 104:1–4 — Observations

- **Second half of verse continues with another double accusative: מְשַׂרְתִּיו אֵשׁ לֵהֵט.**
  - “Making His servants flaming fire” may also refer to their speed of movement (synonymous parallelism) or their devotion and intensity in serving.
  - Construction does not mean “making flaming fire His servants.”
  - Both parallel constructions add to the description of God’s royal splendor.