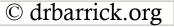
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Biblical Hebrew and the Psalms Psalm 104:1–12



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.

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

1 בְּרַכִי נַפִּשִׁי אֶת־יִהֹוָה

הּוֹד וְהָדֶר לְבֵשְׁתָ:

יָהָנָה אֱלֹהַי

<u>גּד</u>ַלָתַ מָאָד

topical rebia'

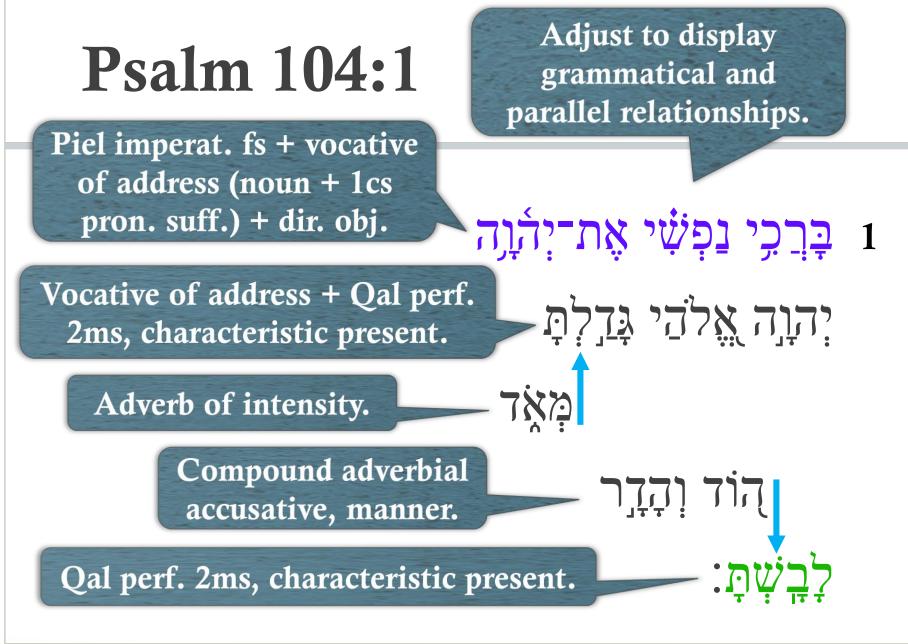
'oleh-weyored = primary disjunctive accent in this verse

tipchah = secondary disjunctive

'atnach = secondary disjunctive in this verse

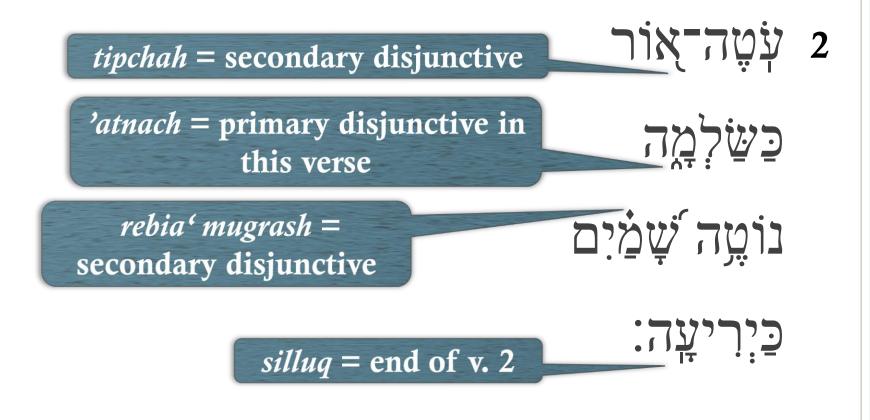
silluq = end of v. 1

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

Qal act. ptcp. ms, characteristic.

Adverbial accusative, instrument.

Adverbial prep. phrase, comparison.

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

Adverbial prep. phrase, comparison.

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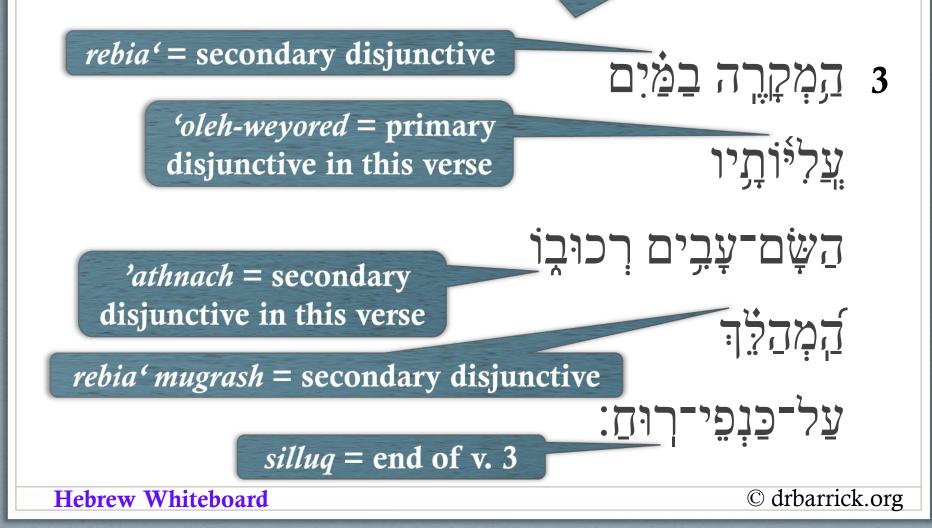
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כּשׂלְמֵה

נוֹמֵה שָׁמַיִם

כיריעה:

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

הַשָּׁם־עַבִים רְכוּבֵו

Piel ptcp. ms w/art.

עַל־כַּנְפֵי־רְוּחַ:-

<u>אַ</u>לּוֹתָיו

Piel ptcp. ms w/art.

Adverbial prep. phrase, location.

Accusative of specification.

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

Adverbial prep. phrase, location.

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



silluq = end of v. 4

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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

עֹּאָָה מַלְאָבָיו רוּחַות

<u>אַשָּׁר</u>ָתִיו

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

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

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

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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)

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

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

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

- Adverbial accusative of means (אוֹר), "with light")—perhaps a reference to Day 1 (Gen 1:3–5).
- Adverbial prepositional phrase of comparison (כַּשֵׂלְמָה, "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.

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

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

- "Clouds as His chariot" (עָרובו)
 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 (הַקָּהַלֵּך), "Who walks") is also articular, like the other two participles in this verse.
- "Upon the wings of the wind" (עַל־כַּנְכֵּי־רוּהַ)
 uses yet another metaphor for imagery.

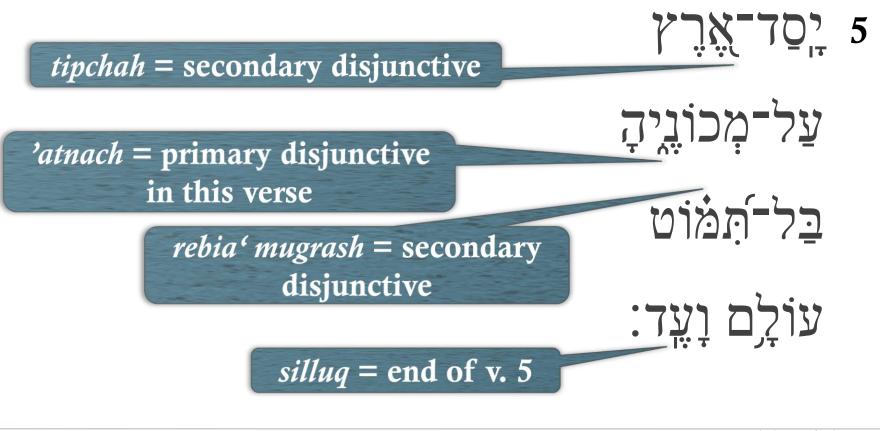
- Verse 4 (like v. 2) starts with עֹשֶׂה ("making"), the final of the six hymnic participles in vv. 2–4.
- Double accusative (מַלְאָכְיו רוּהוֹת) presents the accusative of the produced thing (the second accusative).

 - ✓ Construction does not mean "making winds His messengers"—contra Leupold, 732.

- Second half of verse continues with another double accusative: אָשֶׁרְתָיו אֵשׁ לֹהֵט.
 "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.

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

על־מָכוֹגֶיהָ

עוֹלָם וַאֵד:

בל־תמוט

Qal perf. 3ms + noun fs (direct object).

Adverbial prepositional phrase, location; noun mpl + 3fs pron. suff.

Negative (modal) + Niphal imperf. 3fs (< טוט).

Adverbial temporal phrase.

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5

Identify major Psalm 104:6 disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines. תהום *tipchah* = secondary disjunctive כַּלְבִוּשׁ כָּסִיתָו *'atnach* = primary disjunctive in this verse על־הַרִים *rebia' mugrash* = secondary

disjunctive

silluq = end of v. 6

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<u>יַעַמִדוּ־מ</u>ָיִם:

6

Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

יהֵהוֹם

כָּסָיתוֹ

כַּלְבַוּשׁ

עַל־הָרָים

•

מים:

6

Adverbial accusative, instrument; emphatic word order.

Adverbial prepositional phrase, manner/comparison.

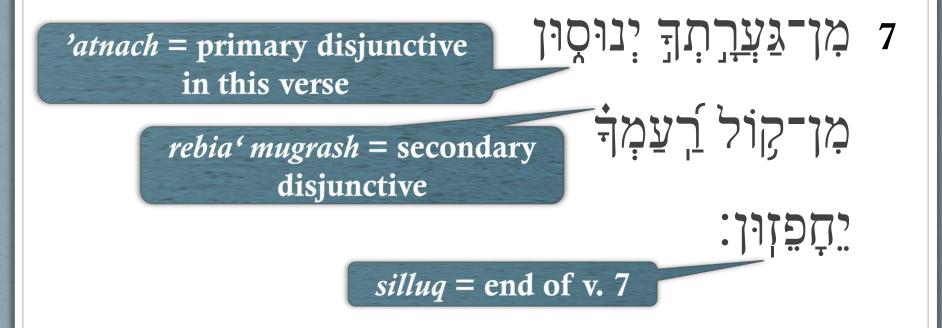
Piel perf. 2ms (< 707) + 3ms pron. suff.

Adverbial prepositional phrase, location; emphatic.

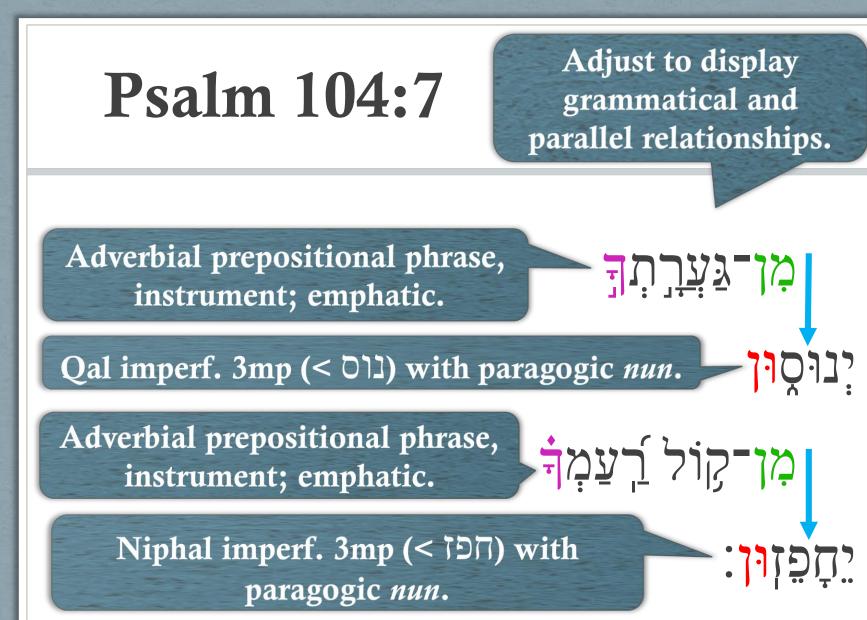
Qal imperf. 3mp (עמד) + subject.

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

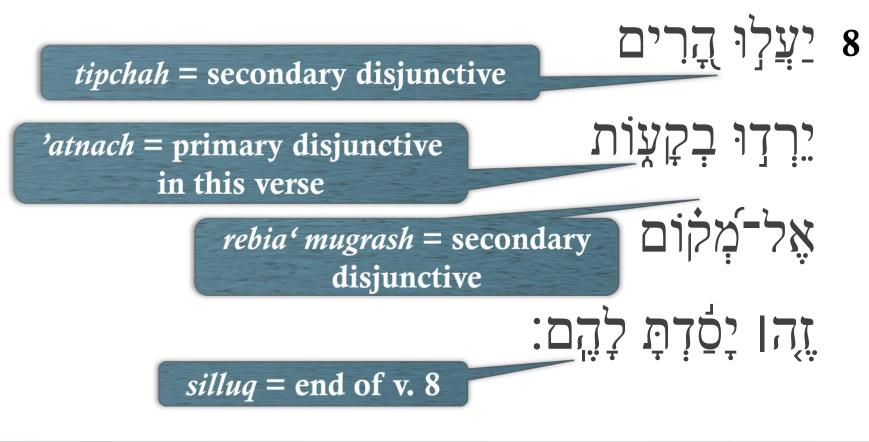


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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

<u>יע</u>לו הַרים 8

יִרְדָוּ בְקַעָוֹת

אַל־מָקׂום

זָהן יָסַדְתָ

Qal imperf. 3mp (< עלה) + subject.

Qal imperf. 3mp (< 7ר) + subject.

Adverbial prepositional phrase, location.

Adjectival relative clause: demonstrative pronoun + Qal perf. 2ms (< 70[°]).

Adverbial prepositional phrase, dative of benefit.

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Psalm 104:5–8 — Translation

5 He established the earth upon its foundations;

It will not be moved forever and ever.

- 6 *With* the deep like a garment You covered it; Over the mountains the waters stood.
- 7 At Your rebuke they fled; At the sound of Your thunder they ran away.
- 8 The mountains rose; the valleys descended; To the place which You established for them.

Psalm 104:5–8 — Translation

- 5 He established the earth upon its foundations; Or, "it will be immovable"
 It will not be moved forever and ever.
- **6** *With* **the deep** like a garment You covered it; Over the mountains the waters stood.
- 7 At Your rebuke they fled; At the sound of Your thunder they ran away.
- 8 The mountains rose;
 the valleys descended—
 To the place which You established for them.

- The inclusio with 'o' sets off the second stanza of this psalm (vv. 5, 8).
- "The earth" is the focal point of v. 5 = Day 3 of creation.
- The negative clause (בל־תַמוֹט) can be translated as "immovable"—cf. HALOT, 131, 555 and GKC, 491 (§156g).
- The temporal clause (עוֹלָם וְשֶׁר) occurs 15x
 (12x in Pss + Exod 15:18; Mic 4:5; Dan 12:3) = "for all time."

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- By placing the adverbial accusative (הָהוֹם) first in v. 6, attention now focuses once again on the waters (see v. 3)—perhaps indicating introduction of a new event.
- Antecedent for 3ms pron. suffix (כְּסִיתוֹ)
 can be אֶרֶץ, because the noun takes either fem. or masc. gender (= common).
- This same pronominal suffix prevents taking ההום as a nominative absolute as Leupold (*Genesis*, 725, 732) does—no evidence to emend the text as Bratcher and Reyburn do (*Psalms*, 880).

- The emphatic adverbial prepositional phrase "above the mountains"

 (עַל־הָרִים) provides first indication that
 might be referring to Gen 7:11
 rather than 1:2.
- Verse 6b, therefore, most likely refers
 to Gen 7:20—גָּבְרָים וַיְכָסָוּ הֶהָרִים

- Verse 7 offers a stronger implication that the text refers to the Flood by use of "Your rebuke" (גַּעֲרָתָךּ).
 - ✓ The strong negative and destructive concept of גער (Liedke, in *TLOT*, 322–23) militates against Creation as the reference.
 ✓ Creation chaos theories (e.g., Kraus, *Psalms*, 300) misrepresent the biblical account, accommodating it to a pagan worldview.

- In both halves of v. 7 the adverbial prepositional phrases take a word order position of emphasis—highlighting the instrumentality of God's actions.
- Both verbs in v. 7 utilize the paragogic nun found 15x in Ps 104 (cp. Deut 56x, Isa 37x, Job 23x); see J-M, 136–37 (§44e).
 ✓ In pause, usually preferred for fuller emphatic form—or, for antiquity, deliberate archaism, or meter.
 - Emphasis on fleeing in terror (see Lewis, in *TWOT*, 310), rather than simple obedience.

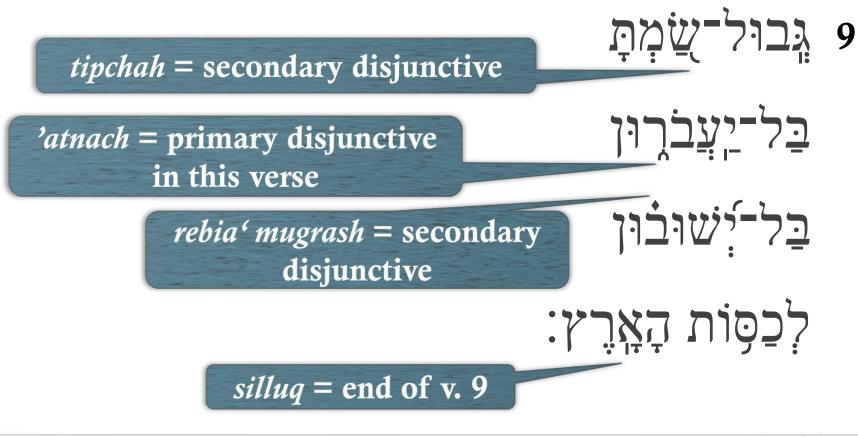
- Verse 8 rounds out the stanza by specifying the formation of mountains and valleys.
- Their respective locations came by divine determination and action.

Sy context this particular tectonic activity occurs at the time of the Flood, rather than on the 3rd day of creation when the land arises out of the primeval deep.

Verse 9 will present additional evidence.

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

גָבוּל־שַׂמָתַ

Lamed + Piel infin.

constr. (< 70) =

adverbial prep.

phrase, purpose.

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9

Emphatic direct obj. by word order + Qal perf. 2ms (< ロバン).

Negative (modal) result clauses both with Qal imperf. 3mp (< רבר) and בועי) with paragogic *nun*.

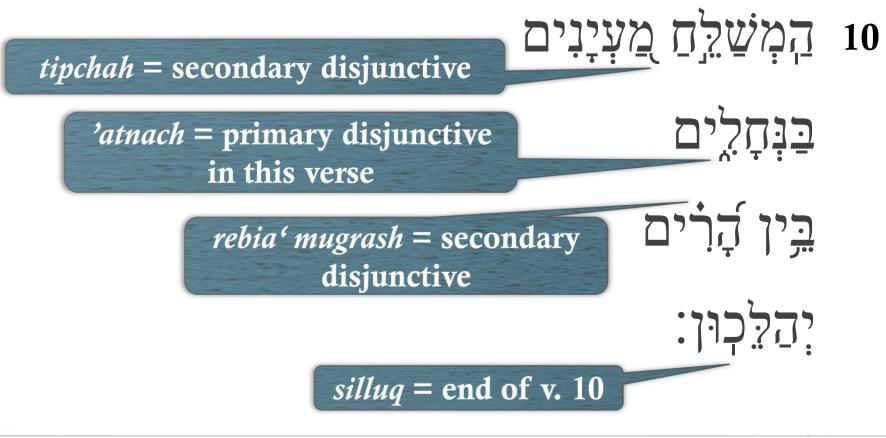
<u>בּל־יִעַבֹר</u>וּן בל־יִשׁוּבֿוּך

לְכַסָּוֹת הָאֶָרֶץ:

Direct object of infinitive.

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Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.



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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

<u>ה</u>מִשַׁלֵּח אַנְיָנִים

הַין

בּנְתַלֵים

Hymnic articular Piel ptcp. ms (< שׁלה) + direct object

Adverbial prepositional phrase, location.

Adverbial prepositional phrase, location.

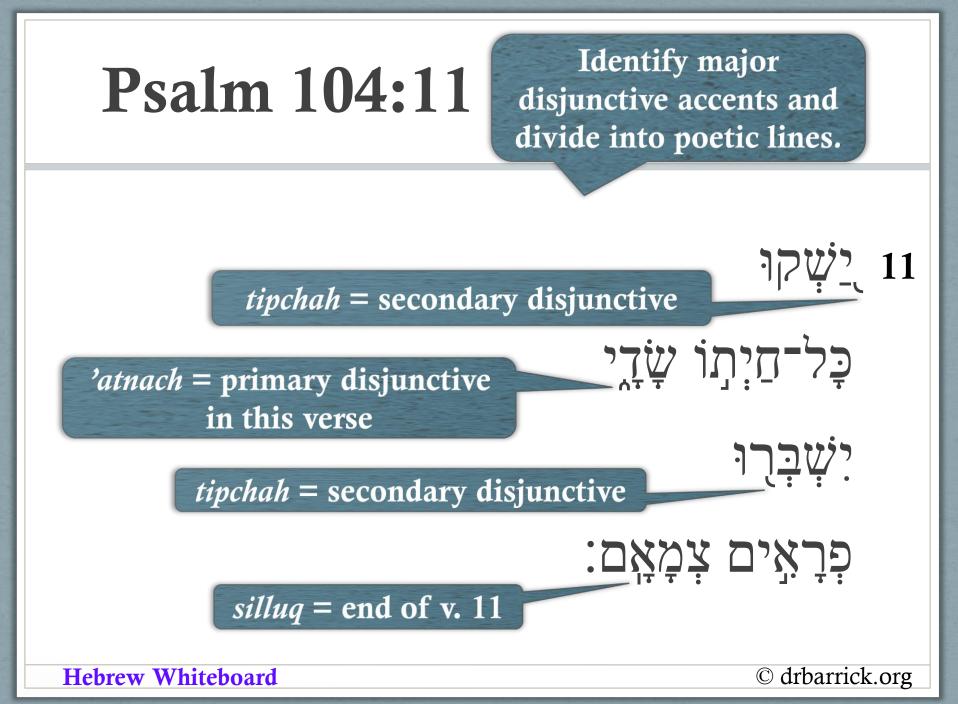
Piel imperf. 3mp (< הלך) with paragogic *nun*.

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יהלכון:

10



Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

כָּל־חַיָּתִו שָׂדֵי

פָרַאֵים צִמַז

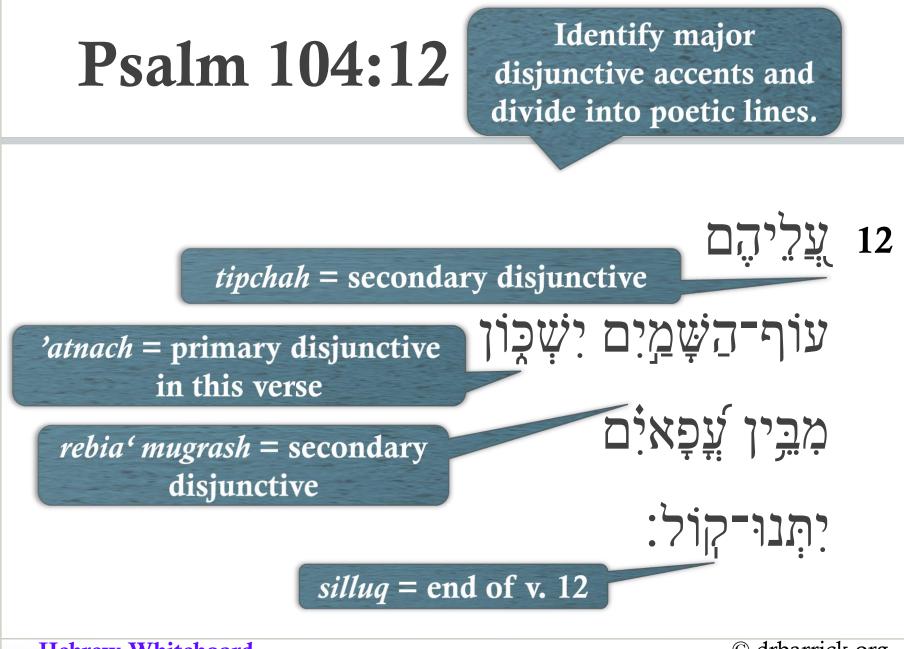
Hiphil imperf. 3mp (< שקה)

Accusative phrase = indirect object; יחי is old construct form for היה.

Qal imperf. 3mp (< つコゼ)

Subject + direct obj. with 3mp pron. suff.

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Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

עוֹף־הַשָּׁמִים יִשְׁכָּוֹן

מְבָין אַפָאיִם

יִתְּבוּ-קוֹל:

Emphatic adverbial prepositional phrase, location.

Emphatic subject + Qal imperf. 3ms (< フンジ)

Emphatic adverbial prepositional phrase, location.

> Qal imperf. 3mp (< כתן) + dir. Obj.

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12

Psalm 104:9–12 — Translation

- 9 You set a boundary so that they might not pass over,
 - So that they might not return to cover the earth.
- **10** Who sends away springs into the valleys— Between the mountains they flow.
- **11** They provide drink to every wild creature—

Wild asses quench their thirst. 12 Beside them the birds of the sky dwell; From the midst of thick foliage they sing.

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Psalm 104:9–12 — Translation

9 You set a boundary

so that they might not pass over, So that they might not return

to cover the earth.

- a 10 Who sends away springs
 - **b into the valleys**—
 - **b' Between the mountains**
- a' they flow.
 - **11** They provide drink to every wild creature— Wild asses quench their thirst.
 - 12 Beside them the birds of the sky dwell; From the midst of thick foliage they sing.

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- "You set a boundary" (גְּבוּלֹ, v. 9) places the indefinite (no definite article) direct object first in word order for emphasis.
- With the perfect (*qatal*) verb form
 (ハベン) the focus falls on the simple fact of the action itself.
- The 2ms perfect verb indicates divine action—God is the antecedent.

 Two negative result clauses in draw the attention of the readers/hearers with the two בל negatives + imperfects. ✓ The negatives occur primarily in poetry, tend to be modal with imperfects, and convey the concept "without." ✓ The imperfect verbs take the paragogic nun to express a degree of emphasis see Observations on v. 7 above.

- The infinitive construct (לְכֵסוֹת) with the
 -prefix in the last phrase of v. 9
 identifies the purpose for the returning of the waters—"to cover the earth."
 - ✓ Piel for this root (त0D) does not indicate any intensity or emphasis, since this root occurs in Qal only 3x and Niphal 1x.
 ✓ This root appears in Piel, Pual, and Hithpael stems over 145x.

- In v. 10 הַמְשָׁלֵה resumes the hymnic participles expressing divine activity (see vv. 2–4 Observations above).
 - ✓ The Piel of שלה occurs 267x as compared to the Qal's 564x; therefore, it may indicate a certain degree of emphasis: (1) causation ("cause to flow"; *HALOT*, 1514), or (2) the sense of "send away," "dismiss," or "expel" (*HALOT*, 1515).
 - ✓ Context of vv. 7–9 seem to indicate the second of these two possible meanings.

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- "Springs" (לַלְעְיָרָים) refers to the sources for streams/rivers of water—the headwaters narrowing and redirecting the focus from "the waters" and "the deep" of vv. 3–9.
- Two adverbial phrases form the focal point of a chiasm (see second Translation slide).
- "Flow" (הַלֵּכְוּן) continues the use of imperfects with paragogic *nun* (see v. 9 and Observations on v. 7).
- Thus, the paragogic *nuns* provide a poetic triplet of forms in vv. 9–10.

- The Hebrew for "valleys" (בְּקָלֹים) in v. 10 differs from that in v. 8 (בְּקְעֹוֹת); the former refers to narrow valleys or wadis as watercourses for either permanent or perennial streams, while the latter refers to broad valleys or plains, with or without watercourses.
 - ✓ V. 8's vocabulary fits better with the uplift of mountains and sinking of valleys.
 - V. 10's grammar specifies the springs as subject of the verb "flow" as compared with mountains and valleys as subjects in v. 8.

- In v. 11 "springs" (v. 10) continues as the subject of the first verb.
- The Hiphil of אָקָה (יַשְׁקוּ) is the root's normal stem (it occurs only 1x in both Niphal and Pual).
 - ✓ In such cases the Hiphil usually equates with the Qal, not expressing any causation.
 ✓ For אקה, however, an inherent causative sense occurs: "give drink," "provide drink."

- The imperfect verbs in vv. 10–11a following the participle beginning v. 10 express continuous action.
- The accusative phrase (כָּלֹ־חַיָתוֹ שֶׂדָי)
 identifies the indirect object.
- An old construct form of הַיָּה in place of appears in הַיָּה; see J-M, 284 (§93*r*).

- The genitive of species (אָרָ שְׁרָי); HBI, 19 [§1.8.1c(6)]) limits the "living creatures" to those that are wild (cf. Kidner, *Psalms*, TOTC, 370) as opposed to domestic livestock.
- The plural "wild asses" (כְּרָאָים) follows the singular "every wild creature" as an example of the greater classification.
- As the first of three verbs with different animals as subject, 『ブダウ? (Qal imperf. 3ms) sets the stage for a triplet of imperfects indicating characteristic action (vv. 11b–12).

- Literally, אָמָאָם אָמָאָם יְשָׁרָוּ פְרָאִים יְשָׁמָאַם reads "wild asses break their thirst" = "wild asses quench their thirst."
- In v. 12 עְלֵיהֶם (adverbial prepositional phrase of location) placed first emphasizes it and brings the reader's attention back to the "springs" of v. 10.
 ✓ Poetic connecting vowel on the preposition + 3mp pronominal suffix with מַעְיָנִים as antecedent; J-M, 287 (§94dN2), 345 (§103m).

- Continuing the inverted word order the psalmist focuses on the "springs" and their relationship to the wild animals (see v. 11).
- The construct phrase with a collective singular, באָשְׁמֵים = "birds of the sky" refers to the aggregate; *IBHS*, 111 (§7.1.a).
- By grammatical attraction to the form of the collective singular, the verb (バジロン) is also a collective singular.

• The second half of v. 12 follows the word order set by the first half, by placing the adverbial prepositional phrase of location first: מְכֵין עֲפָאיָם. ✓ The compound preposition literally reads "from between" = "from the midst of" or "out of the midst of." ✓The noun עַפָאיִם ("thick foliage") occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible.

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- V. 12 concludes with 'הְנוֹ־קוֹל', literally 'they give voice'' or "they raise *their* voice" = "they sing."
- For brief, but exegetically sound, interpretations of vv. 11–12, see VanGemeren, "Psalms," in *EBC*, 5:661; Kirkpatrick, *Psalms*, 609.
- For brief discussion of potential translation issues for vv. 11–12, see Bratcher and Reyburn, *Psalms*, 882.