

Hebrew Whiteboard

Biblical Hebrew and the Psalms

Psalm 5

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 5:1–2

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

silluq = end of v. 1

1 מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

disjunctive *rebia'*

2 אָמַרְי הָאֲזִינָהּ | יְהוָה

silluq = end of v. 2

כִּינָה הִגִּיגִי:

Psalm 5:1–2

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Psalm 5 superscription:
literary identification +
authorship; see Ps 3:1 slide.

1 מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד:

Direct object with 1cs
pronominal suffix +
Hiphil imperative ms with
paragogic *he* + vocative of
address.

2 אֶמְרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה

בְּיָמֶיךָ יְהוָה:

Qal imperative ms with
paragogic *he* + direct
object with 1cs
pronominal suffix.

Psalm 5:2

Perfect chiasm (mirror image inverted parallelism) with focus on central element.

Adjust to display literary device relationships.

2 אָמַרְי

a

b

הֶאֱנִינָהּ

c

יְהוָה

b'

בְּיָנָה

a'

הֶגְיִי:

a element: obj. +
1cs pron. suff.

b element:
imperative + *he*

Psalm 5:3

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

disjunctive *rebia'*

tertiary disjunctive
mehuppah legarmeh

'atnach = primary
disjunctive in this verse

silluq = end of v. 3

rebia' mugrash = secondary
disjunctive for the purpose of
pausing briefly for parallel sounds
in this and the previous line

3 הַקְשִׁיבָהּ לְקוֹל שׁוֹנֵאִי

מִלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהִי

כִּי-אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְפַּלֵּל:

Psalm 5:3

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Hiphil imperative ms with
paragogic *he*

Adverbial prepositional phrase =
lamed + construct noun + noun
with 1cs pronominal suffix

Compound vocative
of address, each
with 1cs pron. suff.

Causal clause = adverbial
prepositional phrase (indirect obj.)
+ Hithpael imperfect 1cs verb

3 הַקֹּשִׁיבָהּ

לְקוֹל שׁוֹנְעִי

מִלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהֵי

כִּי- אֶלֶּיךָ

אֶתְפַּלֵּל:

Psalm 5:1–3 — Translation

- 1** A psalm by David.
- 2** *To my words give ear, O YHWH,
Pay attention to my sighing.*
- 3** Listen attentively to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
Because unto You I am praying.

Italics to mark words added for
smooth English translation.

Psalm 5:1–3 — Translation

Psalm literary superscription

1 A psalm by David.

a **2** *To my words*

b *give ear,*

c

O YHWH,

b' *Pay attention*

a' *to my sighing.*

3 *Listen attentively* to the sound of my cry,
my King and my God,
Because unto You I am praying.

Psalm 5:1–3 — Observations

- Verse 1 contains psalm superscription (see slides on Pss 3:1, 10 and 4:1, 10) and identifies David as the author of Ps 5.
- Verse 2 commences the psalm proper.
- The psalm opens with a chiasm, which often occurs in David's psalms (cf. Ps 4).
- Irregular word order allows creation of chiasm, not for the purpose of emphasis on the object prior to the verb.

Psalm 5:1–3 — Observations

- The chiasm in v. 2 places emphasis on its central element—YHWH.
- Imperatives with paragogic *he* sometimes imply emotion or a sense of urgency.
- Three such imperatives (vv. 2–3) indicate intensity (urgency) by triple repetition.

Psalm 5:1–3 — Observations

- The *pathach yod* (rather than *hireq yod*) on the end of the first word of v. 2 (אֶרְרִי) indicates the 1cs pronominal suffix is attached to a plural noun.
- The noun קִלְקִלָּה (v. 2) occurs only here and Ps 39:4 [Eng. 3].
- The noun שִׁוְעָ (v. 3) is a *hapax legomenon* (the sole occurrence) and means “cry for help.”

Psalm 5:1–3 — Observations

- An unusual parallel assonance (v. 3) led the Masoretes to use *rebia' mugrash* to draw attention to it:

מִלְכִּי וְאֱלֹהֵי *-kî wē'lohāy*

כִּי-אֱלֹהֵי *kî 'ē'leykā*

- The assonance not only serves for aesthetics, but to direct the focus on God—a continuation of the focus in v. 2.

Psalm 5:1–3 — Observations

- The verb closing v. 3 is a Hithpael imperfect 1cs (< פִּלֵּל).
- The root occurs only in Piel and Hithpael, therefore the stem has no known special significance.
- The imperfect, by context, serves as a present of ongoing action, “I am praying.”
- Word order is very flexible in וְ- clauses, allowing emphasis by assonance rather than word order.

Psalm 5:4

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

topical *rebia'*

secondary disjunctive *tipchah*

4 יְהוָה בָּקָר

'*atnach* = primary disjunctive in
this verse

תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי

secondary disjunctive *rebia'*
mugrash

בָּקָר אֶעֱרֹךְ-לִי

silluq = end of v. 4

וְאֶצְפֶּה:

Psalm 5:4

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Vocative of address.

יְהוָה 4

Temporal adverb.

בֶּקֶר ↓

Qal imperf. Jussive 2ms +
dir. obj. with 1cs pron. suff.

תִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי

Temporal adverb.

בֶּקֶר ↓

Qal imperf. 1cs verb, present.

אֶעֱרֶד־

Adverbial prep. phrase of direction
or dative of benefit.

↑ לִי

w^eyiqtol Piel imperf. 1cs (צָפָה), present.

וְאֶצְפֶּה:

Psalm 5:5

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive *tsinnor*

5 כִּי לֹא אֶל־חַפִּץ

'atnach = primary disjunctive in
this verse

רָשָׁע | אֶתָּה

silluq = end of v. 5

לֹא יִגְרֶה רָע:

secondary disjunctive *tipchah*

Psalm 5:5

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Emphatic particle = “Indeed” or “Truly.”

Personal pronoun; by context (cf.
v. 8) setting vv. 5–7 apart.

5 כִּי

Noun (verbless)
clause.

לֹא אֶל־חַפִּיז רָשָׁע | אֱתֵה

Assonance.

לֹא יִגְרֹף רָע:

Qal imperf. 3ms with
2ms pron. suff.

First two of three
uses of negative לֹא.

Psalm 5:6

Note: *Metheg* (left of *tipchah*) marks secondary stress in word and vocal *shewa* following.

Identify major disjunctive accents and divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive *tipchah*

'*atnach* = primary disjunctive in this verse

silluq = end of v. 6

secondary disjunctive *rebia' mugrash*

6 לֹא-יִתְצָבוּ הוֹלָלִים

לִבָּגְד עֵינָיָךְ

שָׁנְאָתָּ כָּל-פְּעָלֵי אֱוֹן:

Psalm 5:6

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Third use of the objective negative.

1st of 4 descriptions
of the wicked.

Adverbial prepositional
phrase of location.

Direct object; characteristic
participle; 2nd of 4
descriptions of the wicked.

6 לֹא-יִתְצַבּוּ הוֹלְלִים

לִנְגֹד עֵינָיו

כָּל-פֹּעֲלֵי אָוֶן:

Imperf.
of future
or modal.

שֹׁנְאָתָךְ

Qal perf. 2ms;
characteristic present.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Translation

4 O YHWH, *in the* morning may You hear my voice;

In the morning I lay out *my prayer* to You

And I watch.

Italics to mark words added for smooth English translation.

5 Indeed, You are not a God delighting in wickedness;

Evil does not sojourn *with* You.

6 Boisterous fools can never stand before Your eyes;

You hate all troublemakers.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Translation

4 O YHWH, *in the morning* may You hear my voice;

In the morning I lay out *my prayer* to You

And I watch.

5 Indeed, **You** are **not** a God delighting in wickedness;

Evil does **not** sojourn *with* You.

6 **Boisterous fools** can **never** stand before Your eyes;

You hate all **troublemakers**.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- Vocative “YHWH” opens v. 4; David addresses God directly by His covenant name.
- Both references to “morning” in v. 4 are adverbial and need “*in the*” added in translation to show that temporal relationship.
- The imperfect jussive verb (“may You hear”) carries expression of David’s desire and a repetitive idea—each morning he prays, may God hear.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- The 1cs pronominal suffix (“my”) personalizes the direct object—no matter how many are praying, YHWH hears David’s voice.
- The second imperfect verb (“lay out”) is also repetitive and present.
- “Lay out” (עָרַךְ) or “arrange,” “set in order,” “make ready”—as in placing the bread in rows on the Tabernacle table or putting troops in battle formation.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- “To You” could be just the indirect object or direction of David’s prayer; or, it could be a dative of benefit or advantage that YHWH receives.
- The advantage or benefit could imply the praise accompanying David’s prayer or a worshipful and reverential attitude.
- “Watch” = “wait for” or “hope for.”

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- The third imperfect has an ingressive force—David *begins* to watch or wait for the answer to his prayer (the unstated direct object).
- David’s act of waiting shows expectation and readiness.
- “Lay out” and “watch” both have military implications and are used in contexts of battle—formation for battle and setting watchmen (sentries).

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- Those two verbs could indicate a context in which David is at war with his enemies—note v. 3’s reference to God as his “King.”
- The particle **וְ** (v. 5) expresses emphasis—note how the Masoretes marked it with a mild disjunctive accent to set it apart and lengthen its tone: “Indeed, . . .” or “Truly, . . .”
- Three objective negatives (**לֹא**) begin here.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- The first negative occurs in a verbless clause (noun clause) with the implied verb “are”—making it a stronger negative than the expected **לֹא**.
- “God” is the Hebrew *El* (**אֱלֹהִים**) = supreme deity—the most widely used name for God among all Semitic languages.
- “Delighting” is the verbal adjective derived from the participle.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- As a verbal adjective, **רָפֵץ** takes a direct object: **רָשָׁע**, “wickedness.”
- “You” (**אַתָּה**), the 2ms personal pronoun acting as the subject of the verbless clause occurs at the end of the clause.
- This word order for a noun clause following **אֵל** places emphasis on the predicate: “are not a God delighting in wickedness.”

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- “You,” though not itself emphatic, does mark out the section by identifying the theocentric focus of vv. 5–7.
- The second half of v. 5 begins with the objective negative marked with a secondary disjunctive accent (אֲלֵ), as though to say, “No! Evil does not sojourn *with* You.”
- Assonance “wickedness” (רָשָׁע) and “evil” (רָע) displays poetic esthetics and the semantic association of the two words.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- Verse 6 begins with the third objective negative (לֹא־לֹא־לֹא)—the triple statement providing emphatic affirmation of the contrast between God’s character and that of wicked, evil, arrogant, trouble-seeking sinners.
- The negative here takes on a stronger adverbial force: “never”—the objective negative often implies permanence.

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- “Can never stand” = “can never take their stand” due to the Hithpael stem (the only stem in which צ׳ is found)—implying they will be frustrated in any attempt to remain firm.
 - Imperfect is perhaps modal: “can.”
- The Qal participle masculine plural, הוֹלְלִים (< III הִלֵּל) literally means “being infatuated”; the reflexive implication is “with themselves.”

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- III הלל as used in this context = “loud boisterous nonsensical behavior and mindset” (Coppes, in *TWOT*, 219) = “boisterous fools.”
- “Before Your eyes” (לְנֶגְדְּ עֵינֶיךָ) = “with You present”; לְנֶגְדְּ = “opposite to” or “against”—a negative connotation.
 - Potential translation: “Boisterous fools will never *be able to* stand firm *when* You are present.”

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- The second half of v. 6 begins with the first perfect (*qatal*) verb form in the psalm; it is a characteristic present, “You hate.”
 - The perfect looks at the situation as a whole from a standpoint of reality.
- The adjective כָּל with an indefinite plural (כָּלֵי) = “every,” though poetry often omits the article, so = “all.”

Psalm 5:4–6 — Observations

- The phrase פְּעֻלַּי אֲנִי begins with the Qal active participle masculine plural construct and the following noun is indefinite, making the full chain indefinite.
- This phrase’s meaning is determined by אֲנִי, which stresses “trouble which moves on to wickedness” (Livingston, in *TWOT*, 23) = “troublemakers.”

Psalm 5:7

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

'oleh-veyored = primary
disjunctive in this verse

secondary disjunctive *rebia'*

silluq = end of v. 7

7 תֹּאבֵד לְבָרִי כָזָב

אִישׁ-דִּמְיָם וּמִרְמָה

יִתְעַב! יְהוָה:

Psalm 5:7

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Piel imperfect 2ms verb;
characteristic present.

Direct object; construct chain.

7 תִּתְּעַבֵּד לְבָרִי כָזָב

אִישׁ-דְּמִים וּמַרְמָה



יִתְּעַבֵּד יְהוָה:

Direct object, construct
chain + *waw* + noun;
hendiadys.

Piel imperf. 3ms verb + subject;
characteristic present.

Psalm 5:8

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive *rebia'*

וְאֲנִי 8

'atnach = primary
disjunctive in this verse

בְּרַב חֲסִדֶּךָ אָבוּא בֵּיתְךָ

secondary
disjunctive *rebia'*
mugrash

אֲשַׁתְּתֶנָּה אֶל־הַיָּכַל־קֹדֶשְׁךָ

silluq = end of v. 8

בִּירְאֶתְךָ:

Psalm 5:8

Disjunctive clause; emphatic personal pronoun; contrast.

Adverbial prepositional phrase modifying following verb.

Qal imperf. 1cs verb + direct object with 2ms pron. suffix.

Hištaphel imperf. 1cs verb.

Adverbial prepositional phrases with 2ms pron. suffix.

Adjust to display grammatical and parallel relationships.

וְאֲנִי 8

בְּרֹב חַסְדֶּיךָ ↓

אָבֹא בִּיתְּךָ

אֲשַׁתְּחֶנָּה

אֶל-הָיֵכַל-לְקֹדֶשְׁךָ

בִּירְאֶתְךָ:

Character-istic presents.

Psalm 5:9

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive *rebia'*

9 יְהוָה נִחֲנִי בְצַדִּיקְתָּךְ

tertiary disjunctive
mehuppah legarmeh

לִמְעַן שׁוּרְרִי

'*atnach* = primary
disjunctive in this verse

הוֹשֵׁר לִפְנֵי זִרְכָּךְ:

silluq = end of v. 9

Psalm 5:9

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Vocative of address.

9 יְהוָה

Qal imperative ms + 1cs
pron. suff. as object.

נִחֲנִי

Adverbial prepositional phrase
+ 2ms pron. suff.; locative.

בְּצִדְקָתְךָ

Hiphil
imperative
ms.

Adverbial prepositional phrase
with masc. pl. noun + 1cs
pron. suff.; causal.

לְמַעַן שׁוּרְרֵי

הַזֶּשֶׁר

Adverbial prepositional
phrase with 1cs pron. suff.;
locative.

לְפָנַי

Direct obj.
+ 2ms
pron. suff.

צִדְקָתְךָ

Psalm 5:7–9 — Translation

- 7** You destroy liars;
A murderous deceiver YHWH abhors.
- 8** But as for me, through the abundance of
Your loyal love I enter Your house;
I bow down in Your holy temple in fear
of You.
- 9** O YHWH, lead me in Your righteousness
because of my enemies;
Make Your way straight before me.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Translation

a **7** You destroy

b

liars;

b'

A murderous deceiver

a' **YHWH** abhors.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Translation

- a 8 But as for me,
b through the abundance of Your loyal love
c I enter Your house;
c' I bow down in Your holy temple
b' in fear of You.
- a 9 O YHWH,
b lead me in Your righteousness
c because of my enemies;
b' Make Your way straight
c' before me.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The 2ms “You” referring to YHWH in vv. 5–6 continues in v. 7.
- The characteristic imperfects in v. 7 follow upon the characteristic perfect (“You hate”) in v. 6.
- The Piel (פִּתְּאֵלָה) is factitive: the Qal of פָּתַל has a stative meaning (“be/become lost”), so is a causative of state in the Piel = “bring into the state of being lost.”

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The Qal active participle m. pl. (לִּבְרִי) in construct with the noun כֶּזֶב expresses the objective genitive—the “lie/falsehood” is what they speak.
- The construct chain means “liars.”
- While v. 6 dealt with evil “doers,” v. 7 deals with evil/lying “speakers.”
- The 3-noun cluster in v. 7b parallels the 2-noun cluster in v. 7a.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The construct chain “man of bloods” (אִישׁ־דָּמִים) = “person of bloodshed” = “murderer”; see GKC, 400 (§124n).
- A nominal hendiadys occurs with with the result that the construct noun chain modifies the noun added with the conjunction *waw* (וְדֹרֵשׁ) = “murderous deceiver”; *HBI*, 20 (§1.8.3a).
- The enallage (switch from 2nd to 3rd person) reasserts the identity of the subject: YHWH.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- **The structure of v. 7 is a chiasm with the “liars”/“murderous deceivers” as the focus in the middle and the actions of YHWH on the outside.**
- **The chiasm also marks the boundary of the 2ms section.**
- **The disjunctive clause opening v. 8 transitions to the 1cs section (just one verse).**

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- Disjunctive clauses consist of *waw* + non-verb (here a pronoun) and often express contrast (as here).
- The adverbial prepositional phrase (כ- preposition + construct noun + noun with 2ms pronominal suffix) precedes the verb it modifies in order to initiate another chiasm.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The adverbial prepositional phrase expresses the means by which David enters (or, will enter) YHWH's "house."
- In v. 8b the Hištaphel stem of **הָוָה** (the only stem in which the root is found) speaks of prostrating oneself in worship.
- Both imperfects in v. 8 can be taken as either characteristic presents or as futures.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- Since the imperfects of v. 7 are characteristic presents, the contrasting of YHWH's actions with David's actions in v. 8 should perhaps also be taken as characteristic presents.
- Both “house” (בֵּית) and “temple” (הֵיכָל) refer to the Tabernacle as in 1 Samuel 1:7, 9.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The 2ms pronominal suffix on בֵּיתְךָ expresses possession: “Your house.”
- The 2ms pronominal suffix on הַיְכָל־קֹדֶשְׁךָ also expresses possession: “Your holy temple.”
- The 2ms pronominal suffix on בְּיִרְאַתְךָ presents an objective genitive: “in fear of You.”

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- “YHWH” at the start of v. 9 is the vocative address, returning the focus back to God as in vv. 5–7.
- The two imperatives express strong pleas, not actual commands—David is not commanding God to act
- “Lead me” (נְהַגֵּנִי < I נְהַגֵּנִי).
- “In Your righteousness” (בְּצִדְקָתְךָ) describes the sphere of that which God considers right.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- The compound preposition לְמַעַן + an infinitive expresses purpose; but, before a noun (as here) it expresses the cause or reason.
- The Polel participle m.pl. (< III שׁוֹר) + 1cs pronominal suffix (שׁוֹרִי) = “my enemies.”
- “Make straight” is הַיֹּשֶׁר (< יָשַׁר), an unusual Hiphil imperative form often taken as an error for הוֹשֶׁר—but הַ is a normal Hiphil prefix.

Psalm 5:7–9 — Observations

- Verses 8 and 9 present parallel structures with an introductory **a**-element identifying the key person followed by **b**- and **c**-elements.
- Verse 8 takes the form of a chiasm with emphasis on the **b**-elements.
- Verse 9 parallels “Your righteousness” with “Your way.”

Psalm 5:10

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

tertiary disjunctive *pazer*

secondary disjunctive
tsinnor

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

'*atnach* = secondary
disjunctive in this verse

silluq = end of v. 10

tertiary disjunctive,
rebia' mugrash

10 כִּי אֵין בְּפִיהוּ נְכוּנָה

קִרְבָּם הַנּוֹת

קִקְרֹר-פְּתוּחַ גְּרוֹנָם

לְשׁוֹנָם יַחְלִיקוּן:

Psalm 5:10

Emphatic כִּי-clause; negative of existence (quasiverbal).

Adverbial prep. phrase + 3ms pron. suff.; locative.

Niphal ptcp. fs, nominal; subject.

Noun clause; descriptive.

Noun clause; descriptive—
inverted order.

Verb clause; Hiphil imperf.
3ms with paragogic *nun*.

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

10 כִּי אֵין

בְּלִיהוּ

נִכּוֹנָה

הַנּוֹת

קִרְבָּם

קִרְב־פְּתוּחַ

גִּרְוֹנָם

יְהִי לִי קוֹן:

לְשׁוֹנָם

3 body
parts +
3mp
pron.
suff.

Psalm 5:11

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive, *rebia'*

11 הָאֲשִׁימָם | אֱלֹהִים

tertiary disjunctive, *tsinnor*

יִפְּלוּ מִמַּעַצוֹתֵיהֶם

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

בָּרַב פִּשְׁעֵיהֶם הִדִּיחָמוּ

'*atnach* = secondary
disjunctive in this verse

כִּי־מָרוּ בָּךְ:

tertiary disjunctive, *tipchah*

silluq = end of v. 11

Psalm 5:11

Hiphil imperative ms + 3mp
pron. suff. + vocative noun.

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Qal imperf. jussive 3mp (נפל)

Adverbial prep. phrase + 3mp
pron. suff.; causal (reason).

Adverbial prep. phrase + 3mp
pron. suff.; instrumental.

Hiphil imperative ms (נדח) + 3mp pron. suff.

Causal clause; particle + Qal perf. 3cp (מרה)

Adverbial prep. phrase + 2ms pron. suff.

11 הָאֱשִׁימָם | אֱלֹהִים

יִפְלוּ

מִמַּעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם

בְּרֹב פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם

הַדִּיתָמוֹ

כִּי־מָרוּ

בָּךְ:

Psalm 5:10–11 — Translation

- 10** Indeed, there is nothing trustworthy in
each one's mouth;
Their inner being is destruction;
An open grave is their throat;
Their tongue flatters.
- 11** Make them pay, O God;
Let them fall because of their plans.
By the multitude of their
transgressions scatter them,
Because they have rebelled against You.

Psalm 5:10 — Translation

Multiple chiasms!

10 Indeed,

a there is **nothing trustworthy** A

b in each one's **mouth**;

b' Their **inner being**

a' is **destruction**;

a An **open grave** is

b their **throat**;

b' Their **tongue**

a' **flatters.**

A'

A

B

B

B'

B'

A'

Psalm 5:11 — Translation

a **11** Make them pay, O God;

b Let them fall

c

because of their plans.

c'

By the multitude of their
transgressions,

a' scatter them,

b' Because they have rebelled

against You.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- Many commentators take v. 10 as a reason clause for David's twofold prayer in v. 9.
 - Some translations leave the particle (כִּי) untranslated (NASB, NASU, NIV, NLT, NJB) or suggest an emphatic translation (NET, “certainly”).
 - The lives of the wicked are contrasted with the way (דֶּרֶךְ) of YHWH (v. 9).

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- Verse 10 consists of a quatrain (4 poetic lines).
- The negative of existence (אֵין, “there is no”) is a quasiverbal by indicating a state of being; it negates the noun (נִכְוָנָה).
- “Trustworthy” = “established,” “steadfast,” “sure,” “certain”; “reliable” is also a good translation.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- The first body part possesses a 3ms pronominal suffix (בְּפִיהוּ) in contrast to the other three parts' 3mp suffixes.
 - The singular could be taken as a collective (“their mouth”) or as a means of focusing on the individual (“each one’s”).
 - An individual focus could imply personal accountability.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- **Body parts emphasize speech (“mouth” and “tongue”) and the internal person (“inner being” and “throat”).**
 - **Their words come from their heart—compare Matt 12:34.**
- **Negative descriptions refer to the destructive results (“destruction” and “open grave”) of the two wicked characteristics (“not trustworthy” and “flatter”).**

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- The 4 lines contain 4 negative descriptions, 4 body parts, and 4 chiasms (see translation slide for v. 10).
 - The two primary chiasms focus on the four body parts representing speech and being.
 - The third chiasm focuses on the destructive results—compare Matt 23:27.
 - The fourth chiasm focuses on the inner person, the ultimate source of the evil.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- “Throat” (גֵּרוֹן) identifies the windpipe (esophagus), which can imply either the breath (perhaps the soul) or the voice.
 - Chiastic parallelism indicates breath/soul.
- The verb “flatter” (יַעֲלִי־קוֹן = “make smooth”), to ignore differences to deceive and gain someone’s confidence.
 - Paragogic *nun* indicates preference for a more emphatic form in pause (note *silluq*); J-M, 1:137 (§44e).

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- Verse 11 comprises an irregular chiasm with a focus on the internal adverbial prepositional phrases.
 - Emphasis on cause of the fall of the wicked and the instrument by which God scatters them.
- The two Hiphil imperatives with 3mp object suffixes highlight God's direct actions and David's urgent request.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- The first imperative from the root אָשַׁם refers to God holding the wicked guilty and bringing them to justice.
- The imperfect jussive verb carries less urgency than the imperative; it expresses how justice might be attained as an ultimate action.
- In a form of “boomerang justice” the plans of the wicked become the cause of their downfall.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- Likewise, their many transgressions become the means by which God scatters them—compare Num 32:23.
 - “Scatter”—compare Deut 30:1.
- The causal ’פ-*clause* modifies only the immediately preceding imperative (“scatter”).
 - The strongest disjunctive accent separates v. 11b from v. 11a.

Psalm 5:10–11 — Observations

- The Qal perfect verb מָרָו focuses on the action as a whole and a statement of fact: “they have rebelled.”
 - Poetically, this verb parallels the Qal imperfect jussive in the first half of the verse.
- The first of three occurrences of בָּךְ (2x in v. 12) expresses the antagonistic rebellion of the wicked “against” God.

Psalm 5:12

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

tertiary disjunctive, *pazer*

12 וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כָּל־חַוְסֵי בָךְ

secondary disjunctive, *tipchah*

לְעוֹלָם יִרְנְנוּ

'*atnach* = primary
disjunctive in this verse

וְתִסַּךְ עָלֵינוּ

וַיַּעֲלֵצוּ בָךְ אֱהָבֵי שִׁמְךָ:

silluq = end of v. 12

tertiary disjunctive,
rebia' mugrash

Psalms 5:12

Weyiqtol Qal imperf. jussive 3mp
+ subject (adject. + Qal act. ptcp.
mp construct.

Adverb. prep. phrase; locative.

Adverb. prep. phrase; temporal.

Piel imperf. jussive 3mp (ןַן); repetitive.

Weyiqtol Hiphil imperf. jussive 2ms
(סכך) + direct obj.; continuous action.

Weyiqtol Qal imperf. jussive 3mp; repetitive.

Qal act. ptcp. mp const. + dir.
obj. + 2ms pron. suff.; subject.

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ כָּל־הַיּוֹסִי 12

בְּךָ

לְעוֹלָם

יִרְנְנוּ

וְתִסְדָּךְ

עָלֵינוּ

וַיַּעַלְצוּ

בְּךָ

אֱהִי שִׁמְךָ:

Psalm 5:13

Identify major
disjunctive accents and
divide into poetic lines.

secondary disjunctive, *tsinnor*

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

'*atnach* = secondary
disjunctive in this verse

silluq = end of v. 13

tertiary disjunctive,
rebia' mugrash

13 כִּי־אֶתָּה תְּבָרֵךְ צַדִּיק

יְהוָה

כַּצִּנֹּה רָצוֹן תַּעֲטִירָנוּ:

Psalm 5:13

Adjust to display
grammatical and
parallel relationships.

Causal clause subordinate to last
verb in v. 12.

Causal particle +
emphatic personal
pronoun + Piel imperf.
2ms, future + dir. obj.

13

כִּי־אָתָּה תִּבְרָךְ לְעַד

Vocative of
address.

יְהוָה

Adverbial prep. phrases
modifying following verb;
comparison and instrument.

כַּצִּנֹּה

רָצוֹן

Qal imperf. 2ms + 3ms pron.
suff.; future.

תַּעֲטִירְנוּ:

Psalm 5:12–13 — Translation

- 12** But let all who take refuge in You be
happy;
Forever let them shout for joy.
May You make them inaccessible;
And may those who love Your name exult
in You,
- 13** Because You Yourself will bless the
righteous *person*;
O YHWH, like a shield You will surround
him with favor.

Psalm 5:12–13 — Translation

12 But let all **who take refuge in You** be happy;

a Forever

b let them shout for joy.

b' May You make ... inaccessible;

a' [**them**]

And may those **who love** Your name **exult in You**,

13 Because **You Yourself** will bless the righteous
person;

O YHWH,

like a shield You will surround him with favor.

Chiasm +
assonance

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- Verse 12 contains three *w^eyiqtol* jussive verbs.
 - The first (וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ) appears to show a contrast to divine judgment on the wicked (v. 11); therefore, “but” represents the *waw*.
 - Following the two Hiphil imperatives and one *yiqtol* jussive in v. 11, *w^eyiqtol* continues the volitive mood; *IBHS*, 563 (§33.4.b).
 - Only יִרְאֶנּוּ lacks the *waw*, because לְעוֹלָם precedes it for emphasis.

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- Three synonyms for “rejoice” appear in v. 12:
 - The verb שׂמח occurs 154x in the Hebrew Bible to express a state of gladness and rejoicing in one’s overall disposition (Waltke, “שׂמַח,” in *TWOT*, 879).
 - The verb רנן occurs 53x in the HB primarily in poetry; it indicates a jubilant cry to God in praise (White, “רָנַן,” in *TWOT*, 851).
 - The verb עלץ occurs only 8x in the HB and is phonetically akin to עלז (13x), both meaning “rejoice” or “exult” vocally (see Ps 68:4, 5); see *HALOT*.

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- The synonyms for rejoice appear to be used in ascending order of intensity.
- Both substantival participles (חֹסֵי and אֱהָבֵי) in v. 12 occur in Qal active masc. pl. construct forms.
 - A prepositional phrase (בְּ) follows the first indicating a genitive of the mediated object; *IBHS*, 155 (§9.6.b).
 - The second construct phrase contains two nouns (the usual construction) and expresses the objective genitive; *HBI*, 18 (§1.8.1b(1)).

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- 3mp pronominal suffix on עָלֵינוּ also occurs in v. 11 on last imperative
 - Probably represents intentional revival of an ancient form, sometimes occurring in clusters, esp. poetry; see GKC, 258 (§91.1).
 - Avoids back-to-back ה and ה (הִדִּיחֵנוּ, v. 11); here it provides **assonance** in a **chiasm**:

Purposes:

(1) Esthetics, (2) emphasis on time, (3) emphasis on objects of divine protection.

a	לְעוֹלָם
b	יִרְגְּנוּ
b'	וְתִסְדֹּךְ
a'	עָלֵינוּ

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- The causal clause (v. 13) modifies the last verb in second half of v. 12.
- The 2ms personal pronoun acts as the emphatic subject of the 2ms verb it precedes: “You Yourself.”
- Piel פָּקַדְךָ is factitive = subject of verb (YHWH) brings object (צַדִּיק) into the state expressed by Qal stative—in this context, *real* rather than *estimative-declarative* (see v. 13b); *IBHS*, 400–403 (§24.2).

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- Note the accents on **עֲלֶיךָ יְהוָה**—‘*oleh-weyored*’ is the strongest possible disjunctive in biblical Hebrew poetry and ‘*atnach*’ acts in a secondary role around it.
- The major logical division of the verse comes after **עֲלֶיךָ**; **יְהוָה** initiates v. 13b as an emphatic vocative—it is not part of v. 13a.
- Read: “Because You Yourself // will bless the righteous *person*; /// O YHWH, // like a shield / You will surround him with favor.”

Psalm 5:12–13 — Observations

- Note the word order in these two verses:
 - v. 12a, לְעוֹלָם יְרֵנּוּ, adverbial prepositional phrase precedes the verb it modifies—to produce chiasm and to highlight assonance with parallel member.
 - v. 13b, כִּבְצִנָּה רָצוֹן תַּעֲטֶרְנוּ, adverbial prepositional (one stated, one implied—רָצוֹן is an adverbial accusative) phrases precede verb they modify—for emphasis.

Psalm 5:14

Following pattern of Hab 3:19,
the musical subscription
numbered as next verse.

Taken from Ps 6:1 to restore
proper division of headings.
Ps 6:1a is musical, while 6:1b
is authorial. Understood
verbs could be:

- a) “given”—for preservation
and use
- b) “accompanied”—
instrumentation
- c) “sung or played according
to”—tune or scale

לְמִנְצָח **a** 14

בְּנִגִּינוֹת **b**

עַל־הַנְּשִׁמִּינִית **c**

מִזְמֹר

Psalm 5:14 — Translation

14 *Given to the music leader,
to be accompanied on stringed
instruments,
sung/played according to [or, upon]
“the eighth”—
a psalm.*

Could be:

- (1) 8-tone scale, or
- (2) Lower octave, or
- (3) 8th string on the instrument(s), or
- (4) 8-stringed instrument

Psalm 5 — Structure

- Changes to observe for structure:
 - Subjects: “You,” “I,” “they”
 - Objects
 - Divine name usage: “YHWH,” “God”
 - Chiasms
 - Clusters of synonyms
 - Verbs: imperatives, jussives, *yiqtol*, *weyiqtol*, *qatal*
 - Vocatives
 - Particles (e.g., ׀—causal or emphatic—former = subordinate, but latter = independent)
 - Disjunctive clauses

Psalm 5 — Structure

v. 1b = Psalm superscription.

I. vv. 2–4: **chiasm**; **1cs**, 9x; **2ms**, 6x (**imperative/ jussive**, 3x); **YHWH**, 2x; **Elohim**.

II. vv. 5–7: **chiasm**; initial emphatic **כִּי**; **לֹא**, 3x; **El** (v. 5), **YHWH** (v. 7); **2ms**, 5x (**pers. pron.**, **perf./ imperf.**); **3mp** (4-fold negative descriptions).

III. vv. 8–9: **chiasm**; **1cs**, 6x (initial **pers. pron.**, disj. clause); **2ms**, 6x; **YHWH** (v. 9).

IV. vv. 10–11: **chiasms**, 3x; initial emphatic **כִּי**; **Elohim** (v. 11); **3mp**, 10x (4-fold descriptions, 2x); **2ms**, 3x (**imperat.**, 2x).

V. vv. 12–13: **chiasm**; **3mp**, 6x (**jussives**, 3x); **2ms**, 7x (**imperf.**, 3x; **emph. pers. pron.**); **YHWH** (v. 13).

v. 14[6:1a] = Psalm subscription.

Psalm 5 — Structure

v. 1b = Psalm superscription.

I. vv. 2–4: **chiasm**; **1cs, 9x**; **2ms, 6x** (imperative/ jussive, **3x**); **YHWH, 2x**; **Elohim**.

II. vv. 5–7: **chiasm**; **initial emphatic יְיָ**; **El** (v. 5); **3mp** (**4-fold negative descriptions**).

III. vv. 8–9: **chiasm**; **1cs, 6x** (initial pers. pron., **disj. clause**); **2ms, 6x**; **YHWH** (v. 9).

IV. vv. 10–11: **chiasms, 3x**; **initial emphatic יְיָ**; **Elohim** (v. 11); **3mp, 10x** (**4-fold descriptions, 2x**).

V. vv. 12–13: **chiasm**; **3mp, 6x** (**jussives, 3x**); **2ms, 7x** (**imperf., 3x**; **emph. pers. pron.**); **YHWH** (v. 13).

v. 14[6:1a] = Psalm subscription.

Overall chiastic pattern—focus
on vv. 8–9.

Psalm 5 — Structure

Literary Superscription (v. 1 [5:1b])

A David's Request for Help to Yahweh (vv. 2–4)

B God's Righteous Judgment (vv. 5–7)

C David's Relationship to Yahweh (vv. 8–9)

B' Yahweh's Righteous Judgment (vv. 10–11)

A' The Righteous Rejoice in Yahweh (vv. 12–13)

Musical Subscription (v. 14 [6:1a])

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 1: The psalm superscription identifies the author as David.

vv. 2–3: David begins his psalm very personally, referring to himself in the 1cs six times—this is his prayer to his sovereign God for his needs:

1. “my words”
2. “my sighing”
3. “my cry”
4. “my King”
5. “my God”
6. “I pray”

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 2–3: David addresses YHWH with three imperatives with a sense of urgency and strong request.

v. 2: “YHWH” is the chiasm’s focus.

v. 3: The subordinate causal clause places “unto You” first to designate the One who can help him—his King and his God.

v. 3: The 1cs imperfect verb identifies this psalm as a prayer.

v. 4: David’s prayer continues with a direct address to YHWH—reminding of the emphasis in v. 2.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 4: Repetition of “morning” (בֶּקֶר) indicates that David sees the time of his prayer as significant—we are not told why.

v. 4: David first asks (with a jussive) that YHWH listen to his voice and then announces that he lays out (arranges) his prayer to Him and awaits (watches hopefully) for an answer.

v. 4: To “lay out” indicates that David presents his prayer with care, purpose, and (perhaps) a priestly attitude (as in arranging a sacrifice on the altar).

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 5: The first of two emphatic 'פ-clauses (see v. 10) occurs here as one of the key ways to indicate a transition in the structure of David's psalm: "Indeed."

vv. 5–6: Four statements declare God's character:

1. He does **not** delight in wickedness.
2. Evil does **not** dwell [even temporarily] with Him.
3. Boisterous fools **cannot** stand before Him.
4. He hates doers of iniquity.

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 5–6: In other words, God is righteous and holy and does not delight in any kind of evil, wickedness, or sin.

vv. 5–6: This is the first of the 4-fold descriptions David uses in his carefully arranged (אֶעֱרֶךְ, v. 4) psalm.

vv. 6–7: By overlapping with the fourth member of his 4-fold description of God's righteousness, David then offers a 4-fold description of the wicked.

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 6–7: 4-fold description of the wicked:

1. The wicked are boastful fools.
2. They are workers of iniquity.
3. They are liars.
4. They are murderous deceivers.

v. 7: #3 and #4 are the chiasm's focus.

v. 7: David closes his 4-fold description of the wicked by restating how YHWH hates (שִׂנְאָה)/abhors (יִתְּעַב) them, thus bringing the topic back to who God is and what He will do—He will destroy (תִּאַבֵּד) them.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 8: A disjunctive clause with a 1cs personal pronoun (“But as for me”) contrasts with the 2ms personal pronoun of v. 5 (“You”), thus marking a new stanza of the psalm (vv. 8–9).

vv. 8–9: This stanza is dominated by 6 first person references (“I,” “me,” “my”—see 6 such references also in vv. 2–3) and 6 second person (“your”) references explaining the relationship between God and David.

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 8–9:

David	YHWH
“But as for me”	“abundance of Your loyal love”
“I come”	“Your house”
“I bow down”	“Your holy temple”
	“fear of You”
“lead me”	“Your righteousness”
“my enemies”	
“before me”	“Your way”

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 8: The terms “house” and “holy temple” used here are used for the Tabernacle in 1 Samuel 1, so do not in any way contradict David’s authorship.

v. 8: The chiasm’s focus is on David’s actions in regard to the Tabernacle.

v. 9: David began the psalm with three imperatives (vv. 2–3) expressing urgency in his prayer for help; now he uses two imperatives expressing strong desire for YHWH’s guidance (“lead,” “make straight”).

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 10: The second emphatic 'וְ-^{וְ}-clause (see v. 5) occurs as one of the key ways to indicate a transition in the structure of David's psalm: “Indeed.”

v. 10: In v. 5 David presented a 4-fold description of YHWH's character; in v. 10 he delivers a 4-fold description of the character of the wicked by means of 4 interwoven chiasms.

Psalm 5:10 — Translation

4 descriptions! 4 body parts! 4 chiasms!

10 Indeed,

a there is **nothing trustworthy** A

b in each one's **mouth**;

b' Their **inner being**

a' is **destruction**;

a An **open grave** is

b their **throat**;

b' Their **tongue**

a' **flatters.**

1

2

4

3

A

B

B'

A'

B

B'

A'

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 10: Thus, there are 4 emphases:

1. Mouth & inner being = words from heart.
2. Throat & tongue = words from heart.
3. Inner being & throat = heart.
4. Destruction & open grave = severe consequences.

v. 10: Compare with Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees in Matthew 12 and 23; also, see Paul's description of sinners in Romans 3!

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 10: The singular with which the 4-fold description begins points to individual accountability.

v. 11: Two imperatives close this stanza in the same way two imperatives closed the previous stanza (vv. 8–9), expressing David’s strong desire and urgent plea.

v. 11: This stanza closes with direct address to *Elohim* (“God”) as the previous stanza closed in direct address to YHWH.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 11: Echoing previous 6-fold elements, the 3mp identifies the wicked as the topic six times and reveals that they shall be the objects of divine judgment:

1. Make **them** pay.
2. Let **them** fall.
3. **Their** plans.
4. **Their** transgressions.
5. Scatter **them**.
6. **They** rebelled.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 11: The chiasm's focus is on the plans and transgressions of the wicked—their evil deeds were intentional.

v. 11: Perfect verbs occur seldom in this psalm and are used as strong summary statements to look at the respective contrasted real states as a whole:

- **v. 6:** “You hate” (שִׂנְאָתָּה) —YHWH
- **v. 11:** “they rebelled” (מָרְדּוּ) —the wicked

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 12–13: The final stanza omits any first person references to David, but uses another 6-fold focus on the second person (God):

1. Refuge in **You**
2. **You** make inaccessible
3. Exult in **You**
4. Love **Your** name
5. You **Yourself** (= You alone)
6. **You** bless

Psalm 5 — Summary

vv. 12–13: The first stanza (vv. 2–4) closed with a *w^eyiqtol* verb (וַאֲצַפֵּה, v. 4); the final stanza (vv. 12–13) begins with and includes three *w^eyiqtol* verbs (וַיַּעֲלֶצוּ, וַתִּסֹּךְ, וַיִּשְׁמְחוּ)—paralleling the two stanzas.

v. 12: David identifies the godly by two Qal active participles here (“taking refuge in [YHWH],” “loving [YHWH’s] name”) in the same way he used two Qal active participles in vv. 6–7 (“doing iniquity,” “speaking lies”) to identify the ungodly.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 12: The chiasm in the middle of this verse:

- Assonance heightens the focus.
- Assonance redirects the focus to the outer parallel elements.
- The focus is on the time and objects of divine protection.

v. 12: Three different verbs for rejoicing show a climactic effect of increasing intensity—countering the three different urgent imperatives with which David commenced his prayer (vv. 2–3).

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 12: The climactic rejoicing implies that David either expects help very soon or that he has already received that help from God.

v. 13: The initial וְ-³clause is causal, thus being subordinate to the preceding verb and tying vv. 12 and 13 closely together.

v. 13: The emphatic personal pronoun (הָאֲנִי, “You”) focuses on YHWH and YHWH alone who blesses the righteous.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 13: Just as a singular focused on individual accountability of the wicked in v. 10, so the singular reference to the “righteous” indicates individual blessing from YHWH.

v. 13: “YHWH” occurs as a vocative in the middle of the first verse of the psalm proper (v. 2) and also as a vocative in the middle of the final verse (v. 13)—contributing to a theocentric theme for the psalm.

v. 13: “Like a shield” (כַּצִּנֹּה) includes the generic definite article—not a reference to a specific shield.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 13: The *rebia' mugrash* accent (רַבִּי'א מִגְרָשׁ) serves to create a brief pause in reading to highlight the comparison of God's protection to a shield.

v. 13: The מִגְרָשׁ refers to an archer's or a spearsman's full-body, standing shield to allow him more cover from exposure to enemy fire (*HALOT*; *TWOT*, #1938a)—these shields could also be used overhead to protect soldiers from arrows, stones, and burning oil coming down upon them from a city wall while they seek to break the city gates open.

Psalm 5 — Summary

v. 13: YHWH surrounds the righteous person “with favor” (רְצוֹן)—placed before the verb to emphasize it.

v. 13: “Surrounds” can also be translated “crowns” (see next note), but the figure of the shield, put together with the previous reference to making the godly inaccessible (וְתַסִּיף, v. 12—can also be translated as “cover”), makes YHWH’s favor the instrument of protection.

v. 13: David might also intend a play on the favor of a king (“crowns”) and his own reference to God as his King (v. 3); see White, “רְצוֹן,” in *TWOT*, 859.

Psalm 5 — Preaching

- We should pray purposefully with the attitude of a priest bringing a sacrifice to our righteous and holy God.
- Foolish, lying, wicked words come out of a foolish, lying, and wicked heart.
- The intensity of our rejoicing in God is increasingly proportionate to our praying, taking refuge in Him, and loving Him.
- Our greatest protection consists of our King's favor.