**The Statistical Significance of the YHWH Acrostics in the Book of Esther**

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Many Christians will be aware that there are four acrostics of the word יהוה (YHWH) in the book of Esther. The word is the name of God in Ex 6:3 etc., but is translated as Κύριος, *Lord*, in quotations in the New Testament. Here are the 4 acrostics in question.

|  |  |  |  |
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| Esth 1:20 |  | And the king's decree which he will make will be heard in all the kingdom, for it *is* great, that all wives should give honour to their husbands, to both great | Initial letters taken backwards |
| Esth 5:4 |  | And Esther said, “If it *has* the king's approval, let the king and Haman come to the banquet today which I have prepared for him.” | Initial letters taken forwards |
| Esth 5:13 |  | Yet all this does not satisfy me, all the time I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.” | Final letters taken backwards |
| Esth 7:7 |  | And the king rose in his fury from the wine banquet, *and went* to the palace garden, while Haman stood to plead for his life with Esther the queen, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. | Final letters taken forwards |

These are not the only acrostics of יהוה in the Hebrew Old Testament (OT). This study looks at the other acrostics in the OT as a whole, and then looks at the statistical significance of the relatively very high concentration of them in the book of Esther.

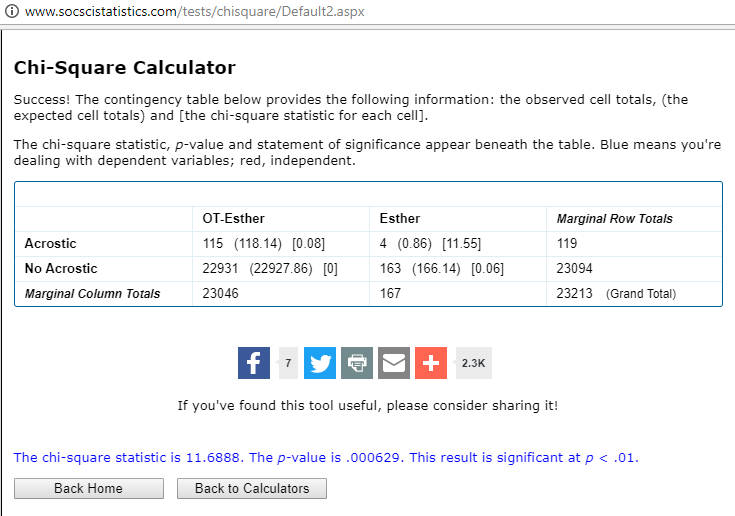
We now need to consider the relative size of Esther and the rest of the Old Testament (OT-Esther).

The OT contains 23213 verses, of which 167 are in Esther, and 23046 are in OT-Esther.

The OT contains 119 YHWH acrostics of which 4 are in Esther, and 115 are in OT-Esther.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| In Esther we have | 4 | verses with YHWH acrostics |
|  | 163 | verses without YHWH acrostics |
|  | 167 | verses in total. |
|  |  |  |
| In OT-Esther we have | 115 | verses with YHWH acrostic |
|  | 22931 | verses without YHWH acrostics |
|  | 23046 | verses in total |

From <http://www.socscistatistics.com/tests/chisquare/Default2.aspx>



This gives a chi-squared value of 11.7, and a probability value of 0.06%. **This is very significant indeed.**

**Appendix** - the list of all YHWH acrostics, in transliteration, where the first acrostic of each of the four kinds (forwards/backwards, initial/final letters of the word) has been highlighted. We have omitted those based on a qere or ketiv issue (Is 16:3, Jer 50:15 [first one], 2 Chr 26:11).

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Gn 11:9 | initial | backwards | h)rc wm$m hpycm yhwh |
|  | Gn 12:15 | final | forwards | %ry pr(h wyhllw )th |
|  | Gn 19:13 | final | forwards | pny yhwh wy$lxnw yhwh |
|  | Gn 19:25 | initial | forwards | y$by h(rym wcmx h)dmh |
|  | Gn 24:58 | final | backwards | lrbqh wy)mrw )lyh htlky |
|  | Gn 38:7 | final | forwards | b(yny yhwh wymthw yhwh |
|  | Gn 43:10 | final | forwards | ky (th $bnw zh |
|  | Gn 49:31 | final | backwards | rbqh )$tw w$mh qbrty |
|  | Ex 3:13 | final | forwards | ly mh $mw mh |
|  | Ex 4:3 | final | backwards | )rch wy$lykhw )rch wyhy |
|  | Ex 4:14 | initial | forwards | ydbr hw) wgm hnh |
|  | Ex 4:16 | initial | backwards | h(m whyh hw) yhyh |
|  | Ex 16:7 | final | backwards | yhwh wnxnw mh ky |
|  | Ex 16:22 | final | forwards | n%y)y h(dh wygydw lm$h |
|  | Ex 25:23 | final | backwards | w)mh rxbw w)mh wxcy |
|  | Ex 37:10 | final | backwards | w)mh rxbw w)mh wxcy |
|  | Lv 8:15 | initial | backwards | hmzbx w)t hdm ycq |
|  | Lv 8:29 | final | backwards | hxzh wynyphw tnwph lpny |
|  | Lv 9:9 | initial | backwards | hmzbx w)t hdm ycq |
|  | Lv 21:22 | initial | backwards | hqd$ym wmn hqd$ym y)kl |
|  | Nu 1:51 | initial | backwards | hlwym wbxnt hm$kn yqymw |
|  | Nu 1:51 | initial | backwards | hlwym whzr hqrb ywmt |
|  | Nu 5:12 | final | forwards | ky t%+h )$tw wm(lh |
|  | Nu 5:18 | initial | backwards | hw) wbyd hkhn yhyw |
|  | Nu 13:30 | final | backwards | n(lh wyr$nw )th ky |
|  | Nu 13:32 | initial | forwards | yw$byh hw) wkl h(m |
|  | Nu 19:12 | initial | backwards | h$ly$y wbywm h$by(y y+hr |
|  | Nu 24:13 | final | backwards | +wbh )w r(h mlby |
|  | Dt 10:7 | initial | backwards | hgdgdh wmn hgdgdh y+bth |
|  | Dt 11:2 | initial | forwards | ydw hxzqh wzr(w hn+wyh |
|  | Dt 20:8 | initial | backwards | hyr) wrk hlbb ylk |
|  | Dt 24:5 | final | forwards | nqy yhyh lbytw $nh |
|  | Dt 30:12 | final | forwards | my y(lh lnw h$mymh |
|  | Dt 31:29 | final | forwards | b(yny yhwh lhk(ysw bm(%h |
|  | Josh 2:15 | initial | backwards | hxwmh wbxwmh hy) yw$bt |
|  | Josh 10:18 | final | forwards | py hm(rh whpqydw (lyh |
|  | Josh 11:16 | initial | backwards | h(rbh w)t hr y%r)l |
|  | Josh 18:28 | initial | backwards | h)lp whybwsy hy) yrw$lm |
|  | Josh 19:47 | final | backwards | )wth wykw )wth lpy |
|  | Josh 24:18 | initial | backwards | h(mym w)t h)mry y$b |
|  | Josh 24:27 | final | backwards | thyh bnw l(dh ky |
|  | Judg 14:2 | final | backwards | w(th qxw )wth ly |
|  | Judg 16:16 | final | forwards | ky hcyqh lw bdbryh |
|  | Judg 19:24 | final | forwards | bty hbtwlh wpylg$hw )wcy)h |
|  | Judg 20:18 | final | forwards | my y(lh lnw btxlh |
|  | Judg 20:41 | final | forwards | ky ng(h (lyw hr(h |
|  | 1 Sam 20:21 | final | backwards | whnh qxnw wb)h ky |
|  | 2 Sam 15:14 | final | backwards | thyh lnw ply+h mpny |
|  | 2 Sam 18:3 | final | forwards | ky (th kmnw (%rh |
|  | 2 Sam 18:4 | initial | forwards | yd h$(r wkl h(m |
|  | 2 Sam 18:4 | initial | backwards | h$(r wkl h(m yc)w |
|  | 1 Ki 7:12 | initial | forwards | yhwh hpnymyt wl)lm hbyt |
|  | 1 Ki 8:42 | initial | forwards | ydk hxzqh wzr(k hn+wyh |
|  | 1 Ki 13:26 | final | forwards | py yhwh wytnhw yhwh |
|  | 1 Ki 16:7 | final | forwards | b(yny yhwh lhk(ysw bm(%h |
|  | 1 Ki 18:3 | initial | backwards | hbyt w(bdyhw hyh yr) |
|  | 1 Ki 18:37 | initial | forwards | yhwh h)lhym w)th hsbt |
|  | 2 Ki 7:2 | initial | backwards | h)lhym wy)mr hnh yhwh |
|  | 2 Ki 10:1 | initial | forwards | yzr()l hzqnym w)l h)mnym |
|  | Is 16:3 | final | forwards | hby)y (ch (%w plylh |
|  | Is 30:26 | initial | backwards | hxmh w)wr hxmh yhyh |
|  | Is 33:22 | final | forwards | ky yhwh $p+nw yhwh |
|  | Is 35:2 | initial | backwards | hkrml wh$rwn hmh yr)w |
|  | Is 45:18 | initial | forwards | ycr h)rc w(%h hw) |
|  | Is 45:20 | initial | backwards | hqbcw wb)w htng$w yxdw |
|  | Jer 9:11 | final | forwards | py yhwh )lyw wygdh |
|  | Jer 9:17 | final | forwards | nhy wtrdnh (ynynw dm(h |
|  | Jer 15:19 | final | forwards | kpy thyh y$bw hmh |
|  | Jer 31:7 | initial | backwards | hllw w)mrw hw$( yhwh |
|  | Jer 33:20 | initial | backwards | hlylh wlblty hywt ywmm |
|  | Jer 48:2 | final | backwards | r(h lkw wnkrytnh mgwy |
|  | Jer 49:19 | final | forwards | ky )rgy(h )rycnw m(lyh |
|  | Jer 49:19 | final | backwards | )rgy(h )rycnw m(lyh wmy |
|  | Jer 50:15 | final | backwards | )$ywtyh nhrsw xwmwtyh ky |
|  | Jer 50:29 | final | backwards | (%th (%w lh ky |
|  | Jer 51:31 | final | forwards | ky nlkdh (yrw mqch |
|  | Ezek 1:27 | final | backwards | wmmr)h mtnyw wlm+h r)yty |
|  | Ezek 23:8 | final | forwards | ky )wth $kbw bn(wryh |
|  | Ezek 30:2 | final | forwards | )dny yhwh hylylw hh |
|  | Ezek 31:15 | final | forwards | (cy h%dh (lyw (lph |
|  | Ezek 46:1 | initial | forwards | ymy hm(%h wbywm h$bt |
|  | Ezek 46:1 | initial | backwards | hm(%h wbywm h$bt yptx |
|  | Hos 11:10 | final | forwards | )xry yhwh ylkw k)ryh |
|  | Joel 2:7 | final | forwards | k)n$y mlxmh y(lw xwmh |
|  | Joel 2:17 | final | forwards | m$rty yhwh wy)mrw xwsh |
|  | Zech 1:5 | initial | backwards | hm whnb)ym hl(wlm yxyw |
|  | Zech 8:19 | initial | backwards | h$by(y wcwm h(%yry yhyh |
|  | Zech 9:17 | final | forwards | ky mh +wbw wmh |
|  | Ps 18:8 | initial | backwards | h)rc wmwsdy hrym yrgzw |
|  | Ps 57:7 | final | forwards | lpny $yxh nplw btwkh |
|  | Ps 73:15 | final | forwards | )mrty )sprh kmw hnh |
|  | Ps 96:11 | initial | forwards | y%mxw h$mym wtgl h)rc |
|  | Ps 96:11 | initial | backwards | h$mym wtgl h)rc yr(m |
|  | Ps 106:1 | final | backwards | hllwyh hwdw lyhwh ky |
|  | Ps 107:24 | final | forwards | m(%y yhwh wnpl)wtyw bmcwlh |
|  | Ps 115:11 | final | forwards | yr)y yhwh b+xw byhwh |
|  | Ruth 1:21 | initial | backwards | hlkty wryqm h$ybny yhwh |
|  | Eccl 3:17 | initial | backwards | hcdyq w)t hr$( y$p+ |
|  | Lam 3:33 | final | backwards | (nh mlbw wygh bny |
|  | Esth 1:20 | initial | backwards | hy) wkl hn$ym ytnw |
|  | Esth 5:4 | initial | forwards | ybw) hmlk whmn hywm |
|  | Esth 5:13 | final | backwards | zh )ynnw $wh ly |
|  | Esth 7:7 | final | forwards | ky klth )lyw hr(h |
|  | Dn 12:1 | initial | backwards | hhy) wb(t hhy) yml+ |
|  | Ezra 8:19 | final | backwards | x$byh w)tw y$(yh mbny |
|  | 1 Chr 5:12 | initial | forwards | yw)l hr)$ w$pm hm$nh |
|  | 1 Chr 8:39 | initial | forwards | y(w$ h$ny w)lypl+ h$l$y |
|  | 1 Chr 16:31 | initial | forwards | y%mxw h$mym wtgl h)rc |
|  | 1 Chr 18:8 | initial | forwards | ym hnx$t w)t h(mwdym |
|  | 1 Chr 21:17 | final | backwards | mh (%w yhwh )lhy |
|  | 1 Chr 22:18 | initial | forwards | y$by h)rc wnkb$h h)rc |
|  | 1 Chr 23:11 | initial | forwards | yxt hr)$ wzyzh h$ny |
|  | 1 Chr 23:17 | final | forwards | wbny rxbyh rbw lm(lh |
|  | 1 Chr 23:19 | initial | forwards | yxzy)l h$ly$y wyqm(m hrby(y |
|  | 1 Chr 26:4 | initial | forwards | yw)x h$l$y w%kr hrby(y |
|  | 1 Chr 27:30 | initial | backwards | hy$m(ly w(l h)tnwt yxdyhw |
|  | 2 Chr 20:34 | initial | forwards | yhw$p+ hr)$nym wh)xrnym hnm |
|  | 2 Chr 23:6 | initial | backwards | hmh wkl h(m y$mrw |
|  | 2 Chr 27:3 | initial | forwards | yhwh h(lywn wbxwmt h(pl |

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