

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.

Esth 1:20	וְנִשְׁמַעַ פְּתָגָם הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר- יַעֲשֶׂה בְּכָל-מְלֻכוֹתָו כִּי רָבָה הִיא וְכָל-הַנָּשִׁים יִתְּנוּ יָקָר לְבַעֲלֵיהֶן לְמַגְדֹּל וְעַד-קָטָן:	And the king's decree which he will make will be heard in all the kingdom, for it <i>is</i> great, that all wives should give honour to their husbands, to both great	Initial letters taken backwards
Esth 5:4	וְתֹאמַר אֶסְתֵּר אֶם-עַל-הַמֶּלֶךְ טוֹב יָבֹא הַמֶּלֶךְ וְהַמֶּן הַיּוֹם אֶל-הַמִּשְׁתֶּה אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתִי לוֹ:	And Esther said, “If it <i>has</i> 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	וְכָל-זֶה אֵינוֹ שֹׂנֵא לִי בְּכָל-עֵת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי רֹאֶה אֶת-מָרְדֳּכָי הַיְהוּדִי יוֹשֵׁב בְּשַׁעַר הַמֶּלֶךְ:	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	וְהַמֶּלֶךְ קָם בְּחֵמָתוֹ מִמִּשְׁתֶּה הַיַּיִן אֶל-גַּנַּת הַבַּיִת וְהַמֶּן עָמַד לְבַקֵּשׁ עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ מֵאֶסְתֵּר הַמַּלְכָּה כִּי רֹאֶה כִּי-כָלְתָה אֵלָיו הַרְעָה מֵאֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ:	And the king rose in his fury from the wine banquet, <i>and went</i> 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>






www.socscistatistics.com/tests/chisquare/Default2.aspx

Chi-Square Calculator

Success! The contingency table below provides the following information: the observed cell totals, (the expected cell totals) and [the chi-square statistic for each cell].

The chi-square statistic, *p*-value and statement of significance appear beneath the table. Blue means you're dealing with dependent variables; red, independent.

	OT-Esther	Esther	Marginal Row Totals
Acrostic	115 (118.14) [0.08]	4 (0.86) [11.55]	119
No Acrostic	22931 (22927.86) [0]	163 (166.14) [0.06]	23094
Marginal Column Totals	23046	167	23213 (Grand Total)

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If you've found this tool useful, please consider sharing it!

The chi-square statistic is 11.6888. The *p*-value is .000629. This result is significant at $p < .01$.

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).

1.	Gn 11:9	initial	backwards	h)rc wm\$m hpycm yhw
2.	Gn 12:15	final	forwards	%ry pr(h wyhllw)th
3.	Gn 19:13	final	forwards	pn yhw wy\$lxnw yhw
4.	Gn 19:25	initial	forwards	y\$by h(rym wcmx h)dmh
5.	Gn 24:58	final	backwards	lrbqh wy)mrw)lyh htlky
6.	Gn 38:7	final	forwards	b(yny yhw wymthw yhw
7.	Gn 43:10	final	forwards	ky (th \$bnw zh
8.	Gn 49:31	final	backwards	rbqh)\$tw w\$mh qbrty

9.	Ex 3:13	final	forwards	ly mh \$mw mh
10.	Ex 4:3	final	backwards)rch wy\$lykhw)rch wyhy
11.	Ex 4:14	initial	forwards	ydbhr hw) wgm hnh
12.	Ex 4:16	initial	backwards	h(m whyh hw) yhyh
13.	Ex 16:7	final	backwards	yhwh wnxnw mh ky
14.	Ex 16:22	final	forwards	n%y)y h(dh wygydw lm\$h
15.	Ex 25:23	final	backwards	w)mh rxbw w)mh wxcy
16.	Ex 37:10	final	backwards	w)mh rxbw w)mh wxcy
17.	Lv 8:15	initial	backwards	hmzbx w)t hdm ycq
18.	Lv 8:29	final	backwards	hxzh wynyphw tnwph lpy
19.	Lv 9:9	initial	backwards	hmzbx w)t hdm ycq
20.	Lv 21:22	initial	backwards	hqd\$ym wmn hqd\$ym y)kl
21.	Nu 1:51	initial	backwards	hlwym wbxnt hm\$kn yqymw
22.	Nu 1:51	initial	backwards	hlwym whzr hqrb ywmt
23.	Nu 5:12	final	forwards	ky t%+h)\$tw wm(lh
24.	Nu 5:18	initial	backwards	hw) wbyd hkhn yhyw
25.	Nu 13:30	final	backwards	n(lh wyr\$nw)th ky
26.	Nu 13:32	initial	forwards	yw\$byh hw) wkl h(m
27.	Nu 19:12	initial	backwards	h\$ly\$y wbywm h\$by(y y+hr
28.	Nu 24:13	final	backwards	+wbh)w r(h mlby
29.	Dt 10:7	initial	backwards	hgdgdh wmn hgdgdh y+bth
30.	Dt 11:2	initial	forwards	ydw hxzqh wzr(w hn+wyyh
31.	Dt 20:8	initial	backwards	hyr) wrk hlbb ylk
32.	Dt 24:5	final	forwards	nqy yhyh lbytw \$nh
33.	Dt 30:12	final	forwards	my y(lh lnw h\$mymh
34.	Dt 31:29	final	forwards	b(yny yhwh lkh(ysw bm(%h
35.	Josh 2:15	initial	backwards	hxwmh wbxwmh hy) yw\$bt
36.	Josh 10:18	final	forwards	py hm(rh whpqydw (lyh
37.	Josh 11:16	initial	backwards	h(rbh w)t hr y%r)l
38.	Josh 18:28	initial	backwards	h)lp whybwsy hy) yrw\$lm
39.	Josh 19:47	final	backwards)wth wykw)wth lpy
40.	Josh 24:18	initial	backwards	h(mym w)t h)mry y\$b
41.	Josh 24:27	final	backwards	thyh bnw l(dh ky
42.	Judg 14:2	final	backwards	w(th qxw)wth ly

43.	Judg 16:16	final	forwards	ky hcyqh lw bdbryh
44.	Judg 19:24	final	forwards	bty hbtwlh wpylg\$hw)wcy)h
45.	Judg 20:18	final	forwards	my y(lh lnw btxlh
46.	Judg 20:41	final	forwards	ky ng(h (lyw hr(h
47.	1 Sam 20:21	final	backwards	whnh qxnw wb)h ky
48.	2 Sam 15:14	final	backwards	thyh lnw ply+h mpny
49.	2 Sam 18:3	final	forwards	ky (th kmnw (%rh
50.	2 Sam 18:4	initial	forwards	yd h\$(r wkl h(m
51.	2 Sam 18:4	initial	backwards	h\$(r wkl h(m yc)w
52.	1 Ki 7:12	initial	forwards	yhwh hpnymyt wl)lm hbyt
53.	1 Ki 8:42	initial	forwards	ydk hxzqh wzr(k hn+wyh
54.	1 Ki 13:26	final	forwards	py yhwh wytanh yhwh
55.	1 Ki 16:7	final	forwards	b(yny yhwh lkh(ysw bm(%h
56.	1 Ki 18:3	initial	backwards	hbyt w(bdyhw hyh yr)
57.	1 Ki 18:37	initial	forwards	yhwh h)lhym w)th hsb
58.	2 Ki 7:2	initial	backwards	h)lhym wy)mr hnh yhwh
59.	2 Ki 10:1	initial	forwards	yzr()l hzqnym w)l h)mnym
60.	Is 16:3	final	forwards	hby)y (ch (%w plylh
61.	Is 30:26	initial	backwards	hxmh w)wr hxmh yhyh
62.	Is 33:22	final	forwards	ky yhwh \$p+nw yhwh
63.	Is 35:2	initial	backwards	hkrml wh\$rwn hmh yr)w
64.	Is 45:18	initial	forwards	ycr h)rc w(%h hw)
65.	Is 45:20	initial	backwards	hqbcw wb)w htng\$w yxdw
66.	Jer 9:11	final	forwards	py yhwh)lyw wygdh
67.	Jer 9:17	final	forwards	nhy wtrdnh (ynynw dm(h
68.	Jer 15:19	final	forwards	kpy thyh y\$bw hmh
69.	Jer 31:7	initial	backwards	hllw w)mrw hw\$(yhwh
70.	Jer 33:20	initial	backwards	hlylh wlbty hywt ywmm
71.	Jer 48:2	final	backwards	r(h lkw wnkrytnh mgwy
72.	Jer 49:19	final	forwards	ky)rgy(h)rycnw m(lyh
73.	Jer 49:19	final	backwards)rgy(h)rycnw m(lyh wmy
74.	Jer 50:15	final	backwards)\$ywyth nhrsw xwmwyth ky
75.	Jer 50:29	final	backwards	(%th (%w lh ky
76.	Jer 51:31	final	forwards	ky nlkdh (yrw mqch

77.	Ezek 1:27	final	backwards	wmmr)h mtnyw wlm+h r)yty
78.	Ezek 23:8	final	forwards	ky)wth \$kbw bn(wryh
79.	Ezek 30:2	final	forwards)dny yhwh hylw hh
80.	Ezek 31:15	final	forwards	(cy h%dh (lyw (lph
81.	Ezek 46:1	initial	forwards	ymy hm(%h wbywm h\$bt
82.	Ezek 46:1	initial	backwards	hm(%h wbywm h\$bt yptx
83.	Hos 11:10	final	forwards)xry yhwh ylkw k)ryh
84.	Joel 2:7	final	forwards	k)n\$y mlxmh y(lw xwmh
85.	Joel 2:17	final	forwards	m\$rt yhwh wy)mrw xwsh
86.	Zech 1:5	initial	backwards	hm whnb)ym hl(wlm yxyw
87.	Zech 8:19	initial	backwards	h\$by(y wewm h(%yry yhyh
88.	Zech 9:17	final	forwards	ky mh +wbw wmh
89.	Ps 18:8	initial	backwards	h)rc wmwedy hrym yrgzw
90.	Ps 57:7	final	forwards	lpny \$yxh nplw btwkh
91.	Ps 73:15	final	forwards)mrty)sprh kmw hnh
92.	Ps 96:11	initial	forwards	y%mxw h\$mym wtgl h)rc
93.	Ps 96:11	initial	backwards	h\$mym wtgl h)rc yr(m
94.	Ps 106:1	final	backwards	hllwyh hwdw lyhwh ky
95.	Ps 107:24	final	forwards	m(%y yhwh wnpl)wtw bmcwlh
96.	Ps 115:11	final	forwards	yr)y yhwh b+xw byhwh
97.	Ruth 1:21	initial	backwards	hlkty wryqm h\$ybny yhwh
98.	Eccl 3:17	initial	backwards	hcdyq w)t hr\$(y\$P+
99.	Lam 3:33	final	backwards	(nh mlbw wygh bny
100.	Esth 1:20	initial	backwards	hy) wkl hn\$ym ytnw
101.	Esth 5:4	initial	forwards	ybw) hmlk whmn hywm
102.	Esth 5:13	final	backwards	zh)ynnw \$wh ly
103.	Esth 7:7	final	forwards	ky klth)lyw hr(h
104.	Dn 12:1	initial	backwards	hhy) wb(t hhy) yml+
105.	Ezra 8:19	final	backwards	x\$byh w)tw y\$(yh mbny
106.	1 Chr 5:12	initial	forwards	yw)l hr)\$ w\$pm hm\$nh
107.	1 Chr 8:39	initial	forwards	y(w\$ h\$ny w)lypl+ h\$!\$y
108.	1 Chr 16:31	initial	forwards	y%mxw h\$mym wtgl h)rc
109.	1 Chr 18:8	initial	forwards	ym hnx\$t w)t h(mwdym
110.	1 Chr 21:17	final	backwards	mh (%w yhwh)lhy

111.	1 Chr 22:18	initial	forwards	y\$by h)rc wnkb\$h h)rc
112.	1 Chr 23:11	initial	forwards	yxt hr)\$ wzyzh h\$ny
113.	1 Chr 23:17	final	forwards	wbny rxbyh rbw lm(lh
114.	1 Chr 23:19	initial	forwards	yxzy)l h\$ly\$y wyqm(m hrby(y
115.	1 Chr 26:4	initial	forwards	yw)x h\$l\$y w%kr hrby(y
116.	1 Chr 27:30	initial	backwards	hy\$m(ly w(l h)tnwt yxdyhw
117.	2 Chr 20:34	initial	forwards	yhw\$p+ hr)\$nym wh)xrnym hnm
118.	2 Chr 23:6	initial	backwards	hnh wkl h(m y\$mrw
119.	2 Chr 27:3	initial	forwards	yhwh h(lywn wbxwmt h(pl

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