

## **Prayer Texts in the Bible**

**The Bible in the Life of the Church Colloquium  
Boston College, October 26, 2018  
Eileen Schuller, osu**

1. The Dead Sea Scrolls: approximately 900 manuscripts, most only preserved in very fragmentary and damaged state, found 1948–1956 in caves near the Dead Sea

The “library” of a Jewish sect, perhaps the Essenes described by Josephus, Philo and Pliny:  
Manuscripts were written *c.* 150 BC –70 CE (site of Qumran destroyed in Jewish Revolt)

A large part of this collection is prayers and psalms; over two hundred texts, many of them that we had never known before. There are also many copies of the biblical Psalter.

2. **Psalms:**

**Prayers for each day of the week (4Q504)**

Rubrics: 'Prayer for the fourth day.' 'Prayer for Sabbath'

Beginning: 'Remember, O Lord ....'

Narrative retelling: over the seven days, goes from Adam to the exile

e.g. 'Adam, our father, you fashioned in the image of your Glory . . . the breath of life you blew into his nostrils and intelligence and knowledge . . . in the Garden of Eden'

Petition: 'have pity on us ... forgive our iniquity and our sin ... strengthen our heart to do ...'

Blessing: '**[Blessed be] the Lord who taught us ....**' Communal response 'amen, amen'

**( Prayers for each day of the month: morning and evening (4Q503)**

Rubrics: "On the x-day of the month in the evening, they shall bless and answer and say ...";

'When the sun goes forth to illumine the earth they shall bless and answer and say ...'

Beginning: '**Blessed be the God of Israel who did .....**'

Conclusion: '**Blessed be you/your name, O God of Israel**'.

Then someone (perhaps the priest) addresses the congregation directly with the words 'Peace be upon you, Israel' (cf. Pss. 125.5, 128.6).

**Prayer for Sabbath from 4Q504**

"Song of praises for the day of Sabbath.

Praise [the Lord forever; Bless] the name of his holiness continually.

Pro[claim his praises from day to day] all

