

Prayer Texts in the Bible

**The Bible in the Life of the Church Colloquium
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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

