

A COMPANION TO THE COMPLETE LOST BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

ONE HUNDRED PRAYERS FROM THE LOST BOOKS

WRITTEN FOR THIS EDITION

The eight prayers printed at the back of the book have a hundred companions here. Like them, these are *original compositions written for this edition* — not ancient texts, and no such claim is made for them. Each takes its language and its burden from a specific passage in one of the fourteen books, named beneath its title, so that the reader who wishes to pray with these old voices rather than merely study them has a hundred more places to begin. Seven for each book; two for the whole. Use them privately, or aloud, or not at all.

CONTENTS

1 ENOCH · *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*

1 FOR THE DAY THE HOLY ONE COMES FORTH

after 1 Enoch 1

Holy Great One, who will come forth from Your dwelling and tread upon the earth, before whom the mountains are shaken and the hills made low: I have read that on that day all the righteous will be delivered and all the wicked will find no rest. Number me, then, not by what I have called myself, but by what You find in me when the counting comes. Where I am hard, melt me like wax before the flame; where I am ungodly, destroy the ungodliness and spare the man. And let me be among those who are elect and holy, with whom You make peace. Amen.

2 AGAINST THE TEACHINGS OF THE WATCHERS

after 1 Enoch 8

Lord of Spirits, when Azazel taught men to make swords and shields and the ornaments that lead the eye astray, and Semjaza taught enchantments, the earth was corrupted and cried aloud to heaven. I confess that I have been an eager student of everything that shines and everything that cuts. Unteach me. Take from my hands the weapons I have learned and from my eyes the vanities I have practised. Let the cry of the earth against the violence done in my day find in me one man who added nothing to it. Amen.

3A CRY WITH THE FOUR WHO LOOKED DOWN

after 1 Enoch 9

God of gods, Lord of lords, King of kings, whose throne of glory stands to all the generations of the ages and whose name is holy and glorious and blessed: the archangels looked down from heaven and saw much blood being shed upon the earth, and they brought the cry of men before You. I add my small voice to theirs. You see everything and nothing can hide itself from You; You saw what was done, and You did not tell them what they should do. Tell me. And whatever You say, let me do it before I have argued. Amen.

4FOR A HIDDEN WORD KEPT SAFE

after 1 Enoch 14 — the vision of the house of fire

Lord, whom Enoch beheld in a house built of crystals, girt with tongues of fire, upon a lofty throne whose wheels were as the shining sun — none of the angels could enter, and no flesh could behold Your face, and yet You called him and said: Come hither, Enoch, and hear my word. I do not ask to see what he saw. I ask only what You said to him: that I would hear Your word, and not fall on my face for fear so long that I forget to listen. Raise me up as You raised him, and speak. Amen.

5A PRAYER OF THE ELECT ONE'S POOR

after 1 Enoch 62 — the kings and the mighty

Head of Days, before whom the kings and the mighty and the exalted shall stand up and see and recognize the One they denied: I have been on both sides of that scene. I have been the mighty who possessed the earth and would not see, and I have been the poor whom they trampled. Make me the third thing — the one who recognizes You in time. Let the face of the Son of Man, when it is revealed, be a face I have already been looking for, and not a face I must be made to see. Amen.

6FOR THE COURSES OF THE LIGHTS

after 1 Enoch 72–82 — the Book of the Heavenly Luminaries

Maker of the sun and the moon, who set them in their portals and gave them their laws so that they rise and set and neither hastens nor lingers: You have made the year exactly, three hundred and sixty-four days, and the stars keep it though men be at fault and do not recognize them. My days keep no such law. They rise late and set early and wander from their portals. Give my life the obedience of the luminaries — not brilliance, only faithfulness to the order You appointed — so that when my course is finished, it is finished in its season. Amen.

7A PRAYER OF THE SHEEP

after 1 Enoch 89–90 — the Animal Apocalypse

Lord of the sheep, who saw the wolves and the dogs and the wild boars devour Your flock, who gave the sheep over to seventy shepherds and commanded another to write down every one they slew beyond Your word: I am a sheep, and I have been blinded, and I have wandered from the way. I have also been a shepherd who destroyed more than he was bidden. Open my eyes as You opened the eyes of the lambs. Raise up the great horn. And when the book of what was done to Your sheep is read before You, let there be one page that is only mercy. Amen.

2 ENOCH · *The Book of the Secrets of Enoch*

8FOR THE TWO WHO CAME AT NIGHT

after 2 Enoch 1

Lord, who sent two men exceeding big to Enoch as he slept — their faces shining like the sun, their eyes like burning lamps — and who said through them: Fear not, the eternal God has sent us: I am afraid of every messenger You send, because they do not look like what I expected. When Your word comes to me in the night, in a form I did not choose, let me answer as he did — Be of good cheer, and go — and follow, without first insisting that I understand where. Amen.

9IN THE FIRST HEAVEN, AMONG THE STORES OF SNOW

after 2 Enoch 5–6

God of the treasure-houses, who keep the snow and the ice and the terrible frost and the dew in their stores in the first heaven, guarded by angels, and open them in their season: I have learned that even the cold has a keeper, and even the frost is sent and not let loose. Then nothing that falls on me has escaped Your hand. Keep me through the season of my snow, and in Your time open the store of dew. Amen.

10FOR THE REPENTANT IN THE THIRD HEAVEN

after 2 Enoch 8–9 — Paradise

Lord of Paradise, whose garden in the third heaven is planted with every tree of sweet flowering and whose fruit is incorruptible, where four streams flow and the tree of life stands where You rest when You go up into Paradise: I have read that this place is prepared for the righteous who endure, who turn their eyes from unrighteousness, who make righteous judgement and give bread to the hungry and cover the naked. That list convicts me and invites me in the same breath. Let me be found, at the end, among those it describes. Amen.

11 **FOR THE GUARDIAN OF THE SUN**

after 2 Enoch 11–15

Maker of the sun, who set fifteen myriads of angels to attend him by day and a thousand by night, who gave him wings and made the phoenix and the chalkydri sing when he rises so that all the birds of the earth answer: You did not make even one morning without ceremony. Teach me not to enter a single day as if it were ordinary. Let my first waking word be praise, as the first sound of the sun is a song. Amen.

12 **A PRAYER OF THE SIXTH DAY**

after 2 Enoch 30 — the making of Adam

Lord, who made man of seven substances — his flesh from the earth, his blood from the dew, his eyes from the sun, his bones from stone, his thought from the swiftness of angels, his veins from the grass of the earth, and his spirit from Your own breath and from the wind — I am all of these, and I have honoured only some. Reconcile in me the stone and the dew, the earth and the spirit. You made two ways for man and said: Know what is good and what is evil. I know. Now give me the will to choose. Amen.

13 **AGAINST THE SLANDERED NEIGHBOUR**

after 2 Enoch 52

Blessed is the one who opens his lips in praise of the God of Sabaoth; cursed is the one who opens his lips to slander his neighbour. Lord, You have set blessing and curse on the same lips, and I have used mine for both in one hour. Blessed is the one who blesses all Your works; cursed is the one who despises the humble and the poor. Set a guard on my mouth before it is set on my heart, and let the last word I speak today be one of the blessed ones. Amen.

14 **AT THE TAKING UP OF ENOCH**

after 2 Enoch 67

Lord, when the time came, You sent darkness upon the earth and covered the men standing with Enoch, and he was taken up into the highest heaven, and the people found the darkness lifted and him gone, and went to their homes. I have watched people I love be taken, and stood in the dark, and gone home. Let me believe about them what the people believed about him: that they were received where You are, and not simply lost where I cannot see. Amen.

3 ENOCH · *The Hebrew Book of Enoch*

15**FOR THE ASCENT OF RABBI ISHMAEL**

after 3 Enoch 1

Holy One, blessed be You, who let Rabbi Ishmael ascend to behold the vision of the Merkaba, and when the princes of the gate would have cast him out, sent Metatron to take him by the hand and say: Come in peace before the high and exalted King; I would not last a moment at the sixth hall. Send me a hand at the door. And whatever I am permitted to see, let me see it in peace, standing at the left of the throne with the ministers, and not thrown down among those who were found unworthy. Amen.

16**FOR THE YOUTH WHO WAS ENOCH**

after 3 Enoch 4

God who took Enoch the son of Jared from among the generation of the Flood, when the whole earth had corrupted its way, and lifted him as a witness against them — one man out of a whole age: You do not need a majority. You have never needed one. If my generation is what his was, let me be the one You take aside, not to be spared the judgement, but to be a witness that righteousness was possible in it. Amen.

17**FOR THE CROWN OF SEVENTY NAMES**

after 3 Enoch 12–13

King of the universe, who wrote upon the crown of Your servant with a pen of flame the letters by which heaven and earth were created, by which seas and rivers, mountains and hills were made: every letter of Your alphabet is a world. Then the words I waste are not small. Sanctify my speech, that I may use letters worthy of the crown they were written on; and when I cannot speak well, let me keep silence, which is also a letter You know. Amen.

18**BEFORE THE ANGEL OF DEATH**

after 3 Enoch 18 and 22

Holy One, before whom the princes of the seven heavens remove their crowns and fall on their faces, before whom Kerubiel and the Watchers and the Holy Ones tremble, whose angels are sprinkled with fire and made new each morning from the river of fire: if the highest servants are unmade and remade before You daily, let me not be surprised that I am. Renew me. Sprinkle me from the river. And let me rise from it as they do — not the same, and not afraid. Amen.

19**FOR THE RIGHT HAND THAT IS BOUND**

after 3 Enoch 48A — the right hand of the Holy One

Lord, whose right hand has been cast behind You since the day the Temple was destroyed and Your children were exiled, and which weeps five rivers of tears — I did not know that You wept. I did not know that anything of Yours was bound. If the deliverance of Your people is also the loosing of Your own hand, then I pray for it with a new understanding: not as a favour I want, but as a freedom You want. Hasten it, for Your right hand's sake. Amen.

20**FOR THE SOULS UNDER THE THRONE**

after 3 Enoch 43–44

God of the spirits of the righteous, who keep beneath the throne of glory the souls that have already been created and returned, and who show the souls of the wicked and the middling their ways through the fire of Gehinnom until they are made pure: I am one of the middling, and I know it. Not Abraham, not the wicked — the in-between, whom Your fire must still refine. Make the refining short, and make it thorough, and receive what is left. Amen.

21**FOR THE CURTAIN WHERE THE GENERATIONS ARE WRITTEN**

after 3 Enoch 45

King of kings, who showed Enoch the curtain spread before Your throne on which all the generations of the world are written and all their deeds, whether done or to be done, to the last generation: my name is on it. What I have done is on it. What I will do is on it. Let me not read this as fate, but as attention — that You have never once looked away. Write, then, on the part of the curtain still ahead of me, something You will be glad to read. Amen.

JUBILEES · *The Little Genesis*

22**FOR THE HEAVENLY TABLETS**

after Jubilees 1

God of Moses on the mountain, who commanded the angel of the presence to write from the beginning of creation until the sanctuary is built among Your people for all eternity: You dictate; You do not improvise. There is a tablet in heaven on which my days were already numbered. I do not ask to read it. I ask to live in such a way that the angel who writes it is not ashamed of the page. Amen.

23A PRAYER OF THE SABBATH OF CREATION

after Jubilees 2

Lord, who made the sabbath a sign between You and Israel and chose it for all the works of Your creation, who told the angels of the presence and the angels of sanctification to keep it with You in heaven and on earth: the highest servants rest. I do not. I have made my own works into a god that never lets me sit. Give me back the seventh day. Teach me to keep it as they do above — not as a rule I obey, but as a feast I am invited to. Amen.

24FOR THE PRAYER OF NOAH AGAINST THE DEMONS

after Jubilees 10

God of the spirits of all flesh, who heard Noah when he prayed for his sons against the unclean spirits that led them astray, and who bound nine parts and left a tenth before the accuser — but taught Noah the medicines and the herbs and let him write them in a book: I have sons and daughters, and there are spirits in my age that lead them astray. Bind what You will bind. And for the tenth part that remains, give me what You gave Noah — remedies, and the wisdom to write them down. Amen.

25FOR ABRAM AT THE WINDOW

after Jubilees 12

Lord, who sat with Abram as he watched the stars all night to know the rain of the coming year, until a word came into his heart: All the signs of the stars are in the hand of the Lord — why do I search them out? — and he prayed instead: Deliver me from the hands of evil spirits, and establish me and my seed for ever. I too watch the signs of my own tomorrow half the night. Put the same word into my heart. Take my astrology and give me a prayer. Amen.

26FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, WHICH BEGAN WITH GRIEF

after Jubilees 34 — Jacob mourns Joseph

God of Jacob, who ordained that Israel should afflict themselves on the tenth day of the seventh month, on the very day the news of Joseph came to his father and he mourned — so that a nation's atonement is kept on the anniversary of an old man's grief: You do not waste sorrow. You build feasts out of it. Take the day my worst news came and make of it a day I return to You. Let my affliction become my atonement, and my mourning a memorial that ends in mercy. Amen.

27A PRAYER OF THE CALENDAR OF HEAVEN

after Jubilees 6

Lord of the fixed year, who commanded that the years be counted in three hundred and sixty-four days and the feasts kept in their seasons, lest they forget Your covenant and walk according to the feasts of the Gentiles after their error: I have kept every calendar but Yours. My days are ordered by whoever shouts loudest. Give me a year that turns on Your appointments and not on the market's, that I may celebrate what You have made holy on the day You made it so. Amen.

28FOR THE RENEWAL OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

after Jubilees 1 and 23

God who promised that the days will begin to grow many and increase, until their days draw nigh to a thousand years, and there will be no Satan and no evil destroyer, and the Lord will heal His servants and they will rise up and see great peace: I live in the short days, the days of the old men who are as children. But You have said what comes after. Hold me to it. When the days are short and evil, let me be one of those who study the law and seek the commandments and return to the way, so that the healing, when it comes, finds me already turned toward it. Amen.

JASHER · *The Book of the Upright*

29FOR THE BOY ABRAM IN THE CAVE

after Jasher 8–9 — Abram hidden from Nimrod

God of Abram, who hid a child in a cave for ten years because a star had risen at his birth and a king was afraid of him, and who let the boy come out and look at the sun and the moon and the stars, and reason from them to You: I have been hidden too, in seasons when I thought nothing was happening. Let the hidden years be schooling. And when I come out, let me see what he saw — that what rises also sets, and only the One who made it is worth serving. Amen.

30FOR THE SMASHING OF THE IDOLS

after Jasher 11

Lord, before whom Abram took a hatchet and broke his father's gods, and set the hatchet in the hand of the largest, and said to Terah: The great one did it, when the little ones ate the offering first — let me be as unafraid of my father's gods as he was. I know which idols in my house are the little ones and which is the large one that would not eat. Give me the hatchet, and the wit to tell the truth in a way that makes the truth undeniable. Amen.

31FOR THOSE WHO STAND IN THE FIRE THREE DAYS

after Jasher 12 — the furnace of Nimrod

God who walked with Abram in Nimrod's furnace for three days and three nights while all the princes of the king looked on, and brought him out with not even the fringe of his garment singed, while Haran, who believed nothing, burned: faith is not a feeling I can produce on the day I am thrown in. Grow it in me now, in the ordinary years, so that when the king's servants come to bind me, it is already there, and You are already in the fire ahead of me. Amen.

32FOR THE BEDS OF SODOM

after Jasher 19 — the judges of Sodom

Righteous Judge, who saw the cities of the plain make laws that punished the giver and rewarded the thief, and stretch every traveller on a bed to fit him by cutting or by racking, and let a girl be stung to death for giving bread to a poor man: her cry went up before You, and You came down. I live in a place with its own beds. When I see the giver punished and the stranger cut to size, let my cry go up with hers; and let me never sit as a judge in that city. Amen.

33FOR ISAAC ON THE WAY TO MORIAH

after Jasher 23

God who tested Abraham, and whom Isaac — who knew — asked only that his father bind him well, lest he tremble and spoil the offering, and that his mother be told gently: give me the obedience of the son as well as the faith of the father. When I am asked to lay down what I love, let me lay it down without trembling and without hardness, and let me think of who will grieve, and be gentle with them. And send the ram. Amen.

34FOR JOSEPH IN THE PIT AND IN THE HOUSE

after Jasher 44 — Joseph resists his master's wife

God of Joseph, who was with him in the pit when his brothers sold him, and with him in Potiphar's house when he was offered everything for one sin, and with him in the prison for refusing it, and who prospered him in every place because he would not do wickedly against You: I have been prospered in places I did not deserve and tempted in places I did not expect. Be with me in both. Let me refuse as he refused, plainly, and leave my garment in her hand rather than my soul. Amen.

35FOR THE WARS OF THE SONS OF JACOB

after Jasher 37–40

Lord of hosts, who let the sons of Jacob stand against the kings of the Amorites and the armies of the cities, few against many, and who gave Judah a voice that made the enemy's hearts melt and Naphtali feet like a deer's: You have never depended on numbers. I am outnumbered by my own habits, my fears, my old defeats. Give me what You gave them — not a bigger army, but a roar in the mouth of the smallest brother, and the certainty that the battle was Yours before it began. Amen.

1 MACCABEES

36FOR MATTATHIAS AT MODIN

after 1 Maccabees 2

God of our fathers, who gave Mattathias a zeal like Phinehas when the king's officer bade him sacrifice to idols before the whole town, and who let one old man's refusal begin the deliverance of a nation: I am asked, more quietly than he was, to bow to what everyone bows to. Give me his answer — Though all the nations obey the king, yet will I and my sons walk in the covenant of our fathers — and give me the sons who follow. Amen.

37BEFORE AN UNEQUAL BATTLE

after 1 Maccabees 3 — Judas before the army of Seron

Lord of heaven, with whom it is all one to deliver with a great multitude or a small company, for the victory of battle standeth not in the multitude of an host, but strength cometh from You: I have counted my enemies and counted my friends, and I am afraid. Judas said: We fight for our lives and our laws; therefore the Lord will overthrow them before us. Fix in me what we fight for. Then the count will not matter. Amen.

38FOR THE CLEANSING OF THE SANCTUARY

after 1 Maccabees 4 — the dedication

Holy One, whose people found the sanctuary desolate, the altar profaned, the gates burned, and shrubs growing in the courts as in a forest, and who wept and fell on their faces and blew the trumpets and then — went to work: they pulled down the defiled stones and laid them in a place until a prophet should come to say what to do, and built a new altar, and lit the lamps again. My sanctuary is desolate too. Let me weep, and then let me work. And let me keep the old stones in a corner until You send someone to tell me what they are for. Amen.

39**FOR THE BROTHER WHO FELL**

after 1 Maccabees 6 — Eleazar and the elephant

God of Eleazar, who ran under the tallest beast in the battle because he thought the king was on it, and slew it, and was crushed when it fell — and did not save the day, and did not save himself, but bought himself a perpetual name: I want to know before I act whether it will work. He did not. Give me the courage to do the right thing even when it will not turn the battle; and if it turns out I was crushed for nothing, let the nothing be Yours to judge. Amen.

40**FOR A NATION BETWEEN EMPIRES**

after 1 Maccabees 8 — the treaty with Rome

Lord, who watched Judas send envoys to Rome because the Greeks were too strong, and who knew, as we do now, what Rome would one day become to Your people: we are always sending envoys to the next empire. We are always sure the new alliance is safer than the old. Give my leaders wisdom, and give me the memory to know that every arm of flesh, however far it reaches, is still flesh. Be our confederate. There is no other that lasts. Amen.

41**FOR THE LAND AT REST**

after 1 Maccabees 14 — the days of Simon

Giver of peace, who granted Your people days under Simon when every man sat under his vine and his fig tree and there was none to make them afraid, when the ancient men sat in the streets and communed of good things, and the young men put on glorious apparel: I have known such days and not thanked You for them, thinking they were the ordinary weather of the world. They were not. They were Your gift between wars. Give them again, to this land and to my house, and this time let me know what I am holding. Amen.

42**FOR A DEATH AMONG THE FEASTS**

after 1 Maccabees 16 — the murder of Simon

God of justice, who saw Simon and his sons made drunk at a feast and slain by a son-in-law who wished to be great — the deliverer of Israel murdered not by Greeks but by his own kin at his own table: it is not only the enemy at the gate I need You to guard against. Keep me from treachery, and keep treachery from me. Let my table be a safe place for those who sit at it, and let me sit safely at the tables of those I trust. Amen.

2 MACCABEES

43FOR THE REBUILT FIRE

after 2 Maccabees 1 — the hidden fire of the altar

Lord, who preserved the fire of the altar in a pit through seventy years of exile, and when the priests drew from it only thick water, and poured it on the wood, kindled from that water a great flame in the sight of all: what I have kept of You looks like thick water to me. It has been a long exile and I cannot see the fire in it. Pour it out anyway. Let the sun shine on it. And kindle, from what looks like nothing, the flame that the fathers hid. Amen.

44FOR HELIODORUS IN THE TREASURY

after 2 Maccabees 3

Almighty Lord, who appeared to the king's treasurer in the sanctuary as a rider on a terrible horse with two young men of excellent beauty who scourged him until he fell speechless — and who then, at the prayer of the high priest whose treasury he had come to rob, restored him to life: You strike, and You heal, and You let the wronged man pray for the wrongdoer's healing. Make me Onias. When my enemy lies before me struck down by Your hand, let me be the one who prays that he may live. Amen.

45FOR ELEAZAR, WHO WOULD NOT PRETEND

after 2 Maccabees 6

God of Eleazar the scribe, ninety years old, who was offered flesh of his own providing so that he might pretend to eat what was forbidden and save his life, and who answered that it becometh not our age in any wise to dissemble, and went to the rack rather than teach the young by his example to lie: I am offered small pretences daily and I take most of them. Give me at ninety — and now — the honour that would not pretend. Let my death, when it comes, leave a memorial of virtue and not an excuse. Amen.

46FOR THE MOTHER OF THE SEVEN

after 2 Maccabees 7

God of the mother who watched seven sons die in one day, and bore it with a good courage because of her hope in You, and spoke to each in the language of their fathers: I cannot tell how ye came into my womb; it was not I that gave you breath and life; therefore the Creator of the world will in His mercy give you breath and life again. I do not have her courage. I ask only her hope — that what was not made by me will not be unmade by anyone but You, and that You unmake nothing You have loved. Amen.

47FOR PRAYER ON BEHALF OF THE DEAD

after 2 Maccabees 12

Lord, before whom Judas made a reconciliation for the dead, having gathered the fallen and found under their coats things consecrated to idols, and yet did not give them up, but prayed that the sin might be wholly put out of remembrance, and sent an offering to Jerusalem for them: You let the living intercede for those who can no longer intercede for themselves. I bring You my dead, and what was found under their coats. Put it out of remembrance. Receive them for the sake of the mercy You showed the seven. Amen.

48FOR THE DREAM OF ONIAS AND JEREMIAH

after 2 Maccabees 15 — the golden sword

God of the dream, who showed Judas before battle the high priest Onias praying with hands stretched out for the whole body of the Jews, and Jeremiah the prophet, of wonderful and excellent majesty, giving him a sword of gold and saying: Take this holy sword, a gift from God: I have read that the dead pray for the living, and that the prophets who are gone still arm those who fight. If it is so, let them pray for me; and if I am given a sword, let me remember whose gift it was when I am tempted to use it for myself. Amen.

49THE WRITER'S PRAYER

after 2 Maccabees 15:38–39 — the epilogue

Lord, the writer of this book ended it saying: If I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto. Let every work of my hands end with that honesty. If it is well, it is Yours; if it is slender and mean, it was what I could attain unto — and You were not deceived about my measure when You gave me the task. Amen.

THE TESTAMENTS OF THE TWELVE PATRIARCHS

50FOR REUBEN'S SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

after the Testament of Reuben 1–4

God of the fathers, before whom Reuben confessed that for seven months he was sick unto death, and repented for seven years, and drank no wine and ate no meat, because of what he did in the night: You accept a long repentance. You accept a short one too, but You do not despise the long. Whatever my Reuben's sin is — and I know it — let me not make peace with it quickly and call the peace forgiveness. Give me the seven years if I need them, and at the end of them, the peace. Amen.

51AGAINST ENVY

after the Testament of Simeon 2–4

Lord, who withered Simeon's right hand for seven days because he envied Joseph and would have slain him, and who healed it when he repented: envy is a spirit that troubles the whole body, so that a man cannot eat or drink or do any good thing, but is always devising to put away the one he envies. I know that spirit by name. Wither what You must in me, and heal it when I have learned. Give me a good mind toward those I envy — and let it begin today, with the one I envy most. Amen.

52FOR THE PRIEST WHO SAW THE HEAVENS OPENED

after the Testament of Levi 2–5 and 8

Most High, who took Levi through the heavens and showed him in the highest the Great Glory, and gave him the blessings of the priesthood until You should come and sojourn in the midst of Israel, and set upon him the robe and the crown and the breastplate and the ephod by the hands of seven men in white: the priesthood I have is smaller than his, but You gave it. Let me wear whatever You have set on me as he wore his — as a sign of the glory to come, not as a possession — and let me teach my children letters, that they may read the law. Amen.

53FOR JUDAH, WHO COULD NOT MASTER WINE

after the Testament of Judah 13–16

God of Judah, who let the strongest of the brothers, who slew lions with his hands, be overcome by wine and by a woman, and confess it on his deathbed so that his sons might know the limits of strength: what I am strongest in, I am weakest beside. Show me the door by which the enemy enters the strong house. And if I must be brought low to learn it, bring me low gently, and early, while there is still time to teach my children. Amen.

54FOR SINGLENES OF HEART

after the Testament of Issachar 3–5

Lord of the husbandman, who blessed Issachar because he walked in singleness of eye, never slandered any man, never envied, never coveted, but bent his back to the field and offered the first-fruits through the priest, and slept the sleep of the tired and not of the anxious: my heart is not single. It has as many rooms as a city. Bring it down to one room with one door, and let the work of my hands be honest enough that I sleep. Amen.

55FOR COMPASSION LEARNED AT SEA

after the Testament of Zebulun 5–8

God of Zebulun, who taught him compassion by the pit where Joseph wept, and by the sea where he shared every catch with the stranger and the sick and the aged, so that the Lord filled his nets and kept him from sickness when his brothers sickened: as a man does to his neighbour, so You do to him. Then let me do to my neighbour what I want done to me — and quickly, for I am often sick. Amen.

56FOR NAPHTALI'S DREAM OF THE SHIP

after the Testament of Naphtali 6

Lord, who showed Naphtali his father's ship, with no sailor and no pilot, driven by a storm and broken on the sea, and the brothers scattered on planks to the ends of the earth — and Levi praying in sackcloth until the storm ceased and the ship came to land in peace, and the father came, and all rejoiced: my family's ship has been broken. We are on planks. Let one of us pray in sackcloth. Bring the ship to land, and bring the father, and let us rejoice with one accord. Amen.

THE PSALMS OF SOLOMON

57FOR THE CITY THAT HEARD THE TRUMPET

after Psalms of Solomon 1 and 8

Lord, who let the psalmist say: I cried unto the Lord when I was in distress, and suddenly the alarm of war was heard before me — and who let him confess that the city had thought itself full of righteousness because it was full of children and wealth: I have mistaken prosperity for approval. When the trumpet sounds and the battering-ram is at my wall, let me not say I did not deserve it; let me say what he said — Thou art righteous, O God, in all Thy judgements — and then ask for mercy anyway. Amen.

58FOR THE MAN WHOM THE LORD REMEMBERETH WITH REPROVING

after Psalms of Solomon 10

Blessed is the man whom the Lord remembereth with reprovng, and whom He restraineth from the way of evil with strokes, that he may be cleansed from sin. Lord, I have prayed to be left alone by Your correction, and You have been kind enough to refuse. He that maketh ready his back for strokes shall be cleansed. Make my back ready. And let me be of those who bear Your yoke, on whom Your mercy is, and not of those who are let go their own way. Amen.

59**FOR THE SINNER AND THE RIGHTEOUS AT THE FALL**

after Psalms of Solomon 13

God who separateth the righteous from the sinner, who chasteneth the righteous as a beloved son and destroyeth the sinner as an enemy: the difference is not in the blow; it is in the hand behind it and the end it serves. When I am struck, let me not ask whether I am being punished or corrected, as though I could tell. Let me ask only to be the beloved son, whose correction is in secret and whose end is life. Amen.

60**FOR THE RAIN AND THE POOR**

after Psalms of Solomon 5

O Lord, Thou art our King for ever and ever, and Thy mercy is upon all the earth. Thou givest to the birds and the fish, and to kings and rulers and peoples, and Thy hand is not shortened for the poor man who calls. Moderate my portion — the psalmist prayed it, and I dare to pray it too. If a man have too much he sinneth; if he have too little he despaireth. Give me what suffices, and with it a heart that knows it suffices, and does not call sufficiency want. Amen.

61**FOR THE SON OF DAVID**

after Psalms of Solomon 17

Lord, who heard Your people ask: Raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant — a king who will not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor multiply gold and silver for war, but whose hope is in the Lord: we have asked for many kings, and got them. Give us this one. And teach us, while we wait, to want a king who reigns like that, and no other. Amen.

62**FOR THE FEAR OF THE LORD THAT IS SONG**

after Psalms of Solomon 15

When I was in distress I called upon the name of the Lord, I hoped for the help of the God of Jacob and was saved. A new psalm with song in gladness of heart, the fruit of the lips with the well-tuned instrument of the tongue, the first-fruits of the lips from a pious and righteous heart — that, Lord, is the offering You ask, and the one I most often forget. Tune my tongue. Let the first fruit of my morning be praise, and let the fear of You mark me, as the psalmist said, with a sign for salvation and not a sign for destruction. Amen.

63FOR THE SCATTERED WHO WILL BE GATHERED

after Psalms of Solomon 11

Blow ye in Zion on the trumpet to summon the saints; cause ye to be heard in Jerusalem the voice of him that bringeth good tidings, for God hath had pity on Israel in visiting them. Stand on the height, O Jerusalem, and behold thy children gathered from the east and the west. Lord, I stand on my own height and look for my own scattered: the children who left, the friends who wandered, the parts of myself I sent into exile. Gather them. Make the crooked places level, and the woods to give shade as they pass. Amen.

THE BOOK OF BARUCH · *With the Epistle of Jeremiah*

64A CONFESSION BY THE RIVER SUD

after Baruch 1–2

O Lord our God, to Thee belongeth righteousness, but unto us the confusion of faces, as it is come to pass this day. Baruch read his book in the ears of the king's son and all the people by the river, and they wept and fasted and prayed, and sent money to Jerusalem for offerings. I have read my own book of what I have done. Give me their weeping. Then give me their sending — some concrete thing done for the place I have wronged — so that my confession does not end at my eyes. Amen.

65FOR THE OLD MEN IN A STRANGE LAND

after Baruch 3 — the search for wisdom

Lord, who asked through Baruch: Who hath gone up into heaven, and taken wisdom, and brought her down from the clouds? Who hath gone over the sea and found her? — and answered: He that knoweth all things knoweth her, and found her out with His understanding, and gave her to Jacob His servant: I have looked for wisdom in the places the giants looked, and the merchants, and the sons of Hagar. Give me the wisdom that walked upon earth and was conversant with men — the book of the commandments of God. Let me turn to her, and take hold, and live. Amen.

66FOR JERUSALEM PUTTING OFF THE GARMENT OF MOURNING

after Baruch 5

Put off, O Jerusalem, the garment of thy mourning and affliction, and put on the comeliness of the glory that cometh from God for ever. Lord, You told the widowed city to stand on the height and look east and see her children gathered from the going down of the sun to the rising. I wear my own garment of mourning, and I have worn it long enough to think it is my skin. Take it off me. Put on me the robe of the righteousness which cometh from You, and set the diadem on my head, and let me look east. Amen.

67A PRAYER OF THE MOTHER CITY

after Baruch 4:9–29

Lord, whose city spoke as a mother: Hearken, O ye that dwell about Sion; God hath brought upon me great mourning, for I saw the captivity of my sons and daughters — go your way, O my children, for I am left desolate — but as your mind was to go astray from God, so, being returned, seek Him ten times more: I have gone astray with my whole mind. Let me return with ten times the mind I left with. And let the mother who watched me go see me come back with everlasting joy. Amen.

68AGAINST THE GODS THAT ARE CARRIED

after Baruch 6 — the Epistle of Jeremiah

Living God, the prophet told the exiles they would see gods of silver and gold and wood borne upon shoulders, that cannot save themselves from rust or moth, that must be carried because they cannot walk, whose priests wipe the dust from their faces: I have carried gods. I have wiped their faces. I have known they could not save themselves and still bowed. Set me down among the things that are carried, and lift up my eyes to the One who carries. Let it be said of me at the end: Better is the just man that hath no idols. Amen.

69FOR THE KING WHO WAS PRAYED FOR

after Baruch 1:11–13

Lord, whose people in captivity sent word to Jerusalem: Pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and for the life of Balthasar his son, that their days may be as the days of heaven, and that we may live under their shadow and find favour in their sight — they prayed for the man who had burned their city. I will not pretend it is easy. But if they could ask You to lengthen the days of the king who exiled them, I can pray for the people who have power over me and do not love me. Give them long days; give me a peaceful life under their shadow; and change their hearts, or mine. Amen.

70FOR THE LIGHT THAT DOES NOT SET

after Baruch 3:33–37

He that sendeth forth light, and it goeth; He called it, and it obeyed Him with fear; the stars shined in their watches and rejoiced, and when He called them they said, Here we be, and so with cheerfulness they showed light unto Him that made them. Lord, let me be one of the lights that says Here I am when called, and shines with cheerfulness and not with grievance. This is our God, and there shall none other be accounted of in comparison of Him. Amen.

1 ESDRAS

71FOR JOSIAH'S PASSOVER

after 1 Esdras 1

Lord, who granted that under Josiah a passover was held such as had not been kept in Israel since the time of Samuel, with the priests in their vestments and the singers in their places and the whole people in their families, from morning to evening, without one failing: I have never kept a feast like that. My feasts are hurried and half-attended. Give me one Josiah's passover before I die — one day wholly given, in order, from morning until evening, with nothing left undone. Amen.

72FOR THE VESSELS RESTORED

after 1 Esdras 2 — Cyrus returns the holy vessels

God of Cyrus, who stirred the spirit of a Persian king to send back the vessels that had been taken from Jerusalem — the cups of gold and silver, the censers, the bowls, five thousand four hundred and sixty-nine, counted out and delivered to the hand of Sanabassar: You keep an inventory of everything that was taken from Your house. Nothing is lost; it is only in Babylon. Number what was taken from me, and in Your time stir the heart of whoever holds it, and count it back into my hand. Amen.

73FOR THE CONTEST OF THE THREE YOUNG MEN

after 1 Esdras 3–4

Lord of truth, before whom three guardsmen wrote what is strongest — wine, the king, women — and one wrote also: but above all things Truth beareth away the victory, for she endureth and is strong for ever, and all the people shouted: Great is Truth, and mighty above all things: I have served the first three. I have told myself they were only strong. Let me write the fourth on my paper today, and stand up before whoever is king and say it, and let my reward be the one Zerubbabel asked — not gold, but leave to rebuild what was burned. Amen.

74FOR THE WINE THAT MAKES KINGS FORGET

after 1 Esdras 3:17–24

Lord, the first young man said that wine makes the mind of the king and the orphan one, the bondman and the freeman, the poor and the rich; it turns every thought to jollity and mirth so that a man remembers neither sorrow nor debt — and when he is sober he does not remember what he did. I have used many things as wine, to forget sorrow and debt and what I owe You. Sober me. Let me remember my debts, so I can pay them; my sorrows, so You can heal them; and my brothers, so I do not draw a sword on them. Amen.

75FOR THE OLD MEN WHO WEPT AT THE FOUNDATION

after 1 Esdras 5:63–65

God of the second temple, before whom the young shouted for joy when the foundation was laid, and the old men who had seen the former house wept with a loud voice, so that the people could not discern the trumpets for the weeping — both were right. Let me rejoice at what You are building and let me grieve what was lost, in the same hour, and not despise the one for the other. And let the sound that goes up to You be so mixed that You hear it as one people, and not two. Amen.

76FOR THE READING OF THE LAW IN THE STREET

after 1 Esdras 9 — Ezra reads the law

Lord, whose priest Ezra stood on a pulpit of wood before the multitude from morning to midday, in the broad place before the porch, and read the law in the hearing of men and women, and the Levites taught the people, and all wept when they heard it — and were told: This day is holy unto the Lord; go, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions to them that have nothing, for the joy of the Lord is your strength: let me hear Your law and weep, and then let me be told to go and eat, and to send portions to those who have nothing. Make my sorrow for sin end in a feast for the poor. Amen.

77FOR THE FOREIGN WIVES PUT AWAY

after 1 Esdras 8–9 — Ezra's grief

Righteous God, before whom Ezra rent his garments and pulled the hair of his head and sat down astonished, and said: O Lord, I am ashamed and confounded before Thy face, for our sins are multiplied above our heads — and who watched a people undo, in the rain, in the open square, what they had done in secret: I have entanglements I know You did not appoint. Give me Ezra's shame, which is the beginning of freedom. And let what must be undone be undone openly, even in the rain, rather than kept in the dark and called a mercy. Amen.

2 ESDRAS

78FOR THE MAN WHO ARGUED WITH THE ANGEL

after 2 Esdras 3–4

Lord, who sent Uriel to Ezra when he could not understand why Babylon prospered and Zion was ashes, and who let the angel say: Thine heart hath gone too far in this world, and thinkest thou to comprehend the way of the Most High? — and who did not silence Ezra for asking, but answered him for seven visions: I have the same question, and I have been afraid to ask it. You did not strike Ezra for arguing. Let me argue too, in faith; and when You answer, as You answered him, that I cannot weigh the fire or measure the wind, let that be enough until it is more. Amen.

79**FOR THOSE WHO SOWED AND LITTLE CAME UP**

after 2 Esdras 8 — the seed and the harvest

Most High, who said: Like as the husbandman soweth much seed upon the ground and planteth many trees, and yet the thing that is sown good in his season cometh not up, neither doth all that is planted take root — so is it of them that are sown in the world: I have sown much and seen little rise. Let me not despise the few that came up because of the many that did not. And when I am tempted to grieve over the multitude that perish, let me hear what You told him: Thou comest far short that thou shouldest love My creature more than I. Amen.

80**FOR THE WEeping WOMAN WHO BECAME A CITY**

after 2 Esdras 9–10

God of the vision, who showed Ezra a woman weeping in a field for her only son who died on his wedding night, and who, when he rebuked her for mourning while all Zion mourned, changed her before his eyes into a city builded, with large foundations: my private grief and the grief of the whole world are the same grief seen from two distances. Comfort me as You comforted her — not by making the loss smaller, but by showing me the city it stands in. Amen.

81**FOR THE EAGLE AND THE LION**

after 2 Esdras 11–12

Lord, who showed Ezra the eagle with twelve wings and three heads that ruled the whole earth with much oppression, and the lion roused out of the wood that said to it: Hear thou, I will talk with thee, and the Highest shall say unto thee, Art thou not it that remainest of the four beasts whom I made to reign in My world, that the end of their times might come through them? — every empire believes it is the last. Every eagle believes it will not be judged. Let me not serve the eagle for my safety. And when the lion speaks, let me be on the side of the lion. Amen.

82**FOR THE MAN WHO CAME UP FROM THE SEA**

after 2 Esdras 13

Most High, who showed Ezra a man coming up from the midst of the sea, who flew with the clouds of heaven, before whose voice all things trembled, and who gathered to himself a peaceable multitude — the man whom You have kept a great season, by whom You will deliver Your creature: I do not know his name in Ezra's book. I know that everything trembles before his voice and that the multitude he gathers is peaceable. Gather me to it. Let me be one of those who come to him not with weapons but in peace. Amen.

83FOR THE NINETY-FOUR BOOKS

after 2 Esdras 14 — Ezra restores the scriptures

God who gave Ezra a cup full of something like fire to drink, so that his heart uttered understanding and his mouth opened and was not shut, and five men wrote for forty days, and ninety-four books were written — twenty-four to be published and seventy to be kept for the wise: I hold a book that was once lost and is not lost now. Every word in it came through fire and a hand and forty days of someone's labour. Give me the reverence to read what was so hardly saved, and the wisdom to know which of its words are for everyone and which are for the wise. Amen.

84A PRAYER IN THE DAYS OF THE SIGNS

after 2 Esdras 5 and 16

Lord, who said the days would come when the sun should suddenly shine in the night and the moon by day, and blood drop out of wood, and friends make war on one another, and wisdom hide herself — and who said also: My elect shall not be lost, and I shall preserve them: I read the newspaper and I read Ezra and I cannot always tell which is which. Whether these are the days or not, make me one of the elect who are not lost. Let me keep the law, and hear counsel, and not be afraid; for these are the signs, and You have said what comes after them. Amen.

THE APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH · 2 Baruch

85FOR THE ANGELS WHO THREW DOWN THE WALL

after 2 Baruch 6–8

Mighty One, who sent four angels with lamps of fire to the corners of the city, and a fifth who took the veil and the ark and the mercy-seat and the tablets and the vessels and said to the earth: Guard them until the last times — and who only then let the enemy in, so that no stranger could say he had overthrown Zion: I have watched my walls fall and thought the enemy did it. Show me the angel with the lamp. Show me what You took out first and hid in the earth. Nothing of Yours was in the ruin when it burned. Amen.

86FOR THE BODY THAT SITS IN DARKNESS

after 2 Baruch 10–12

Lord, whom Baruch addressed sitting before the gates of the temple: Blessed is he who was not born, or who, having been born, has died; but as for us who live, woe unto us, because we see the afflictions of Zion — I have prayed that prayer. I know its taste. You did not rebuke him for it; You answered him with the Vision of the Cloud and the black waters and the bright waters. When I have prayed my woe to its end, answer me too. Show me the bright waters that come after the black. Amen.

87FOR THE TWO WORLDS

after 2 Baruch 14–15 and 21

Mighty One, who told Baruch: This world is to them a strife and a labour with much trouble; and that accordingly which will come, a crown with great glory — and: Whatever is now is nothing, but that which shall be is very great: I have spent myself on the nothing and saved nothing for the very great. Redistribute my heart. Let me labour in the strife without loving it, and wait for the crown without pretending I have earned it. And if the youth of the world is past and the pitcher is near the cistern, let me be found awake. Amen.

88FOR THE CONSOLATION OF THE NINE AND A HALF TRIBES

after 2 Baruch 78–87 — the Epistle

God of the scattered, to whom Baruch wrote from Jerusalem to the tribes beyond the river: Remember that ye are of the same stock as we; and: Nothing has been taken from us except what we delivered up; and: If ye endure and persevere in His fear and do not forget His law, the times shall change over you for good: I have brothers beyond a river I cannot cross. Carry a letter to them by an eagle, as You did for him. Tell them we are of the same stock. Tell them we have not forgotten them, and to keep the law where they are, that the times may change over us all together. Amen.

89FOR THE SHEPHERDS AND THE LAMPS

after 2 Baruch 77

Lord, when the people said to Baruch: Behold, thou departest from us, and where shall we seek the law? — he answered: Shepherds and lamps and fountains came from the law; and though we depart, the law abideth. If ye have respect to the law and are intent upon wisdom, a lamp will not be wanting, and a shepherd will not fail, and a fountain will not dry up. My shepherds have departed, Lord. My lamps have gone out. Give me back the law from which they came, and raise new ones from it. Amen.

90FOR THE BRIGHT WATERS OF THE LAST TIME

after 2 Baruch 72–74 — the Messiah's reign

Mighty One, who promised through the bright waters that after the signs the Anointed One will sit in eternal peace on the throne of His kingdom, and joy will be revealed and rest appear, and healing descend in dew, and disease withdraw, and anxiety and anguish and lamentation pass from among men, and gladness proceed through the whole earth; and no one shall again die untimely — I have memorized the list. I say it over in the night. Hasten it. And until it comes, let me be one of the few in whom some of it has already begun. Amen.

91FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD UNCHANGED

after 2 Baruch 50–51

Lord, who told Baruch that the earth will restore the dead as it received them, in the same form, so that those who live may recognize one another — and that afterward the righteous will be changed, their splendour glorified, their faces made like the light of the stars, and the aspect of the wicked made worse, so that each may know what he chose: I will be raised as I am, and then I will be changed into what I chose. Let me choose now what I want to become then. And let the ones who knew me recognize me, and be glad. Amen.

THE ASCENSION OF ISAIAH

92FOR THE PROPHET SAWN IN TWO

after the Ascension of Isaiah 5

God of Isaiah, who let him be sawn asunder with a wooden saw while Belchira stood by and mocked, and who gave him grace to neither cry aloud nor weep, but to speak with the Holy Spirit until he was sawn in twain: I ask for nothing of that death. I ask for what he had in it — that my mouth might speak with Your Spirit when it is most costly, and that I might not recant to save myself what You have told me to say. Amen.

93FOR THE DESCENT THROUGH THE FIRMAMENT

after the Ascension of Isaiah 7 — the strife in the firmament

Lord of the seven heavens, who showed Isaiah that in the firmament Sammael and his hosts are engaged in a great strife, envying one another, and that as it is above so is it on the earth, for the likeness of what is in the firmament is here: the wars I fight are copies of a war I cannot see. Let me not mistake the copy for the original. Lift me, as You lifted him, above the firmament where the strife ceases, and let me see from there what my quarrels really are. Amen.

94FOR THE ROBES KEPT IN THE SEVENTH HEAVEN

after the Ascension of Isaiah 8–9

Most High, who showed Isaiah in the seventh heaven the righteous from the time of Adam onward, stripped of the garments of the flesh and clothed in the garments of the world above, and the robes and thrones and crowns laid up for those who believe in the One who will descend: there is a robe with my name on it, laid up before I have earned it. Let me not stain the flesh so badly that I am ashamed to be stripped of it. And let me believe in the One who descended, so that the robe is mine and not another's. Amen.

95FOR THE ONE WHO DESCENDED UNKNOWN

after the Ascension of Isaiah 10

Beloved, who descended through each heaven and took at every gate the form of those who kept it, so that the angels of each heaven did not know You and did not praise You, and the princes of this world did not recognize You — You hid Your glory to reach the lowest place. If You came unrecognized to the angels, I need not be surprised that You came unrecognized to me. Open my eyes at the gate. Let me be one who knows You in the form You have taken to come to me. Amen.

96FOR THE VISION ISAIAH WAS FORBIDDEN TO TELL

after the Ascension of Isaiah 11

Lord, who told Isaiah: Return into thy garment until thy days are fulfilled, and then thou shalt come hither — and who told him, and Hezekiah, and the prophets, to guard the vision and not to tell it to the people of Israel: You give some things to be kept and not spoken. I have told everything I ever saw of You, some of it too soon. Teach me to guard a vision. Let me return into my garment and finish my days, carrying what I saw quietly, until I am called up to see it again. Amen.

97AGAINST THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHECY LIES

after the Ascension of Isaiah 2–3

God of truth, before whom Isaiah withdrew to the mountain with the prophets who believed in the ascension into heaven, and lived on wild herbs, because Jerusalem was full of the false prophets of Manasseh and the words of Belchira who said: Isaiah and those who are with him prophesy lies against Jerusalem — the accusation has not changed in all these years. When the city calls the truth a lie, give me the mountain and the herbs and the company of those who believe. Keep me from prophesying comfort I was not sent to give. Amen.

98FOR HEZEKIAH, WHO WAS TOLD AND COULD NOT CHANGE IT

after the Ascension of Isaiah 1

Lord, who let Isaiah tell Hezekiah that Manasseh his son would serve Beliar and undo his father's work, and would saw the prophet asunder — and who did not let the king's tears change it, for the plan of the Lord was fixed: I have children whose paths I cannot fix. I have wept as he did. Let me do what he did afterward: call my son, and give him the words of righteousness anyway, and commit him to You. What the tears cannot change, the words may yet reach. Amen.

FOR THE WHOLE COLLECTION

99 **BEFORE BEGINNING TO READ**

for the reader opening the book

God who spoke to Enoch, to Moses on the mountain, to Baruch at the gates, to Ezra in the field, and let their words be written down and carried through fire and exile and the votes of councils to this page: I am about to read what they wrote. Give me the reader's three gifts — attention, that I may read what is there; humility, that I may not read what is not; and patience with the gaps, where the manuscript is silent and the scribe could do no more. Let me finish these books wiser than I began them, and let me be counted among those who write down truthfully and change nothing. Amen.

100 **FOR THE SCRIBES, TRANSLATORS, AND KEEPERS**

for those through whom these books came

Lord of the long memory, we thank You for the nameless Ethiopian monks who copied Enoch and Jubilees by hand for a thousand years when the rest of the world had lost them; for the Slavonic scribe who kept the Secrets of Enoch; for the Syriac hand that saved Baruch's apocalypse in a single manuscript; for the Jews who preserved the Hebrew Enoch; and for the scholars — Charles, Morfill, Odeberg, Samuel, Gray — who gave these voices English. None of them knew who would read their work. Bless their memory. And make me a keeper too, of whatever You have put into my hands to pass on. Amen.