



שבועות [Shavuot](#) /
Feast of Weeks—
Pentecost

All You Need is Love

דבק [dabaq](#) cleave/be joined together/pursue hard after is the word used in [Genesis 2.24](#) when God says a man should leave his parents and דבק his wife. It's the same word used in [Deuteronomy 13.4](#) when God says to keep His commandments, obey His voice, serve Him, and דבק Him. For a Bible-believing person, the primary focus in this life is to cleave to God, to fall in love with God, to pursue hard after God as one pursues love with a spouse. Jews consider it arrogant and insulting if a Christian thinks the Jew has no relationship with God. שבועות is the feast of God with ישראל [Yisra'el](#) Israel entering into a marriage relationship with תורה [Torah](#) Law/Instruction as the covenant. When asked which is the greatest commandment, ישוע [Yeshua](#) Jesus/salvation in [Matthew 22.36-40](#) quotes [Deuteronomy 6.5](#) and says, “Love יהוה [YHVH](#) the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” He goes on to say the next greatest commandment is [Leviticus 19.18](#), “Love your neighbor as yourself.” So תורה is not about living in bondage to an angry God as so many think, but about loving God and neighbor—and being loved in return. תורה is about Love!



As another example that the purpose of the Law is to love God, [Deuteronomy 30.6,8](#) says that God will circumcise our hearts (Paul didn't create this idea for [Romans 2.29](#)), so that we will love God and obey His commandments. Circumcision/Love God/Obey Commandments. It all goes together. The promise of the New Covenant, [Jeremiah 31.30-33](#) and repeated in [Hebrews 8.8-12](#), is that God will write this תורה on our hearts.

Gift of the Law The feast of שבועות celebrates the gift of תורה to Israel at Mt. Sinai, when God “marries” ישראל, [Jeremiah 3.14](#), and the gift of the summer wheat harvest. Physical bread and spiritual bread—we need both, [Deuteronomy 8.3](#).



שבועות

Which Came First? Many Christians assume that a major difference between the “Old” and “New” Covenants is that the Old is about the Law and the New is about grace. Does this fit with Scripture? Is the Old Covenant putting Law first?

Paul makes the argument in [Romans 4](#) that Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness *500 years before Moses and the Law*. But grace and faith precede Abraham, because Noah, [Hebrews 11.7](#) says, received righteousness through faith. And [Deuteronomy 32.8](#) adds that the nations were divided according to the number of the sons of **יִשְׂרָאֵל**—who were not yet born. **יִשְׂרָאֵל** becomes an obviously-chosen people when God releases them from bondage in Egypt—grace—and *they receive the Law after being chosen and given grace*—the same as today. In both Old and New, salvation comes first, then Law as a way to keep the relationship. There are 613 Laws in the Old Testament, and over 1,000 in the New! Law is not anti-grace, it’s a gift.

In [Genesis 3.15](#), God says that the seed of the woman will crush the Serpent. And [Revelation 13.8](#) says that the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world.

יִשְׂרָאֵל and Moses receive the Law at **שבועות** about 3,500 years ago, after being chosen and receiving grace. Abraham is credited with righteousness because of his faith 4,000 years ago. Noah received righteousness through faith 5,000 years ago. God promised a Savior to crush Satan perhaps 6,000 years ago. And before the earth existed, God put in place His plan of redemption. *So grace has always come before Law.*

Different Mindset Christians tend to see the Law as something bad, “We’re not under the Law anymore, we’re under grace.” Actually, a better way to put that would be that we’re no longer under the penalty of the Law, as in [Galatians 3.13-14](#). The Law wasn’t “good” in the Old Testament and “bad” in the New. It was good then and now! But Christians can fall into the trap of ignoring the Law, keeping the laws no one wants to argue about like, “Do not murder, Do not commit adultery.” Or breaking the Law and hoping God will protect us from the consequences because of grace. But for the observant Jew, the Law is a way to avoid sin in the first place, to **דבוק**. The Christian tends to think of salvation in terms of the Rapture and going to heaven. The Jew tends to think of salvation in terms of how to live now. Which mindset would you rather have? Which mindset do you think God would prefer you to have?

The Law is a Tutor Paul says in [Galatians 3.23-25](#) that the Law is our schoolmaster or tutor until faith. Many Christians take this to mean that we can toss the tutor. Does this make sense? Consider this analogy: A King hires a tutor to raise His sons who will become princes, to teach them how to rule in the Kingdom. When the princes grow up, do they shoot the tutor, reject what he taught them, and then proclaim that their actions are now according to the King’s wishes since they are princes? Of course not! The tutor’s training would stay with the princes, his Law becoming a part of them. They live lives of self-control, as God wants us to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.



Keep תורה Instead of tossing תורה, we should continue to internalize what תורה teaches. David says in [Psalm 119.66](#), “Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I have אמן *aman* believed Your commandments.” A mistake Christians often make is to define belief as “mental assent.” This can be called missing heaven by eighteen inches, the distance from the head to the heart. But אמן means to support/confirm/be faithful/uphold/nourish (as a foster father or mother)/support like the pillars of a door/make firm/establish/verify/trust/and believe in. Do you shoot תורה or אמן it?

אמן is the same consonants as אמן *amen* verily/truly/amen/so be it as used in verses such as [Deuteronomy 27.26](#), “Cursed [be] he that confirmeth not [all] the words of this תורה to do them. And all the people shall say, אמן.” Do you shoot תורה or אמן it?

If you אמן the Law, not just “give mental assent to it,” are you its editor? [James 4.11-12](#) says that if you judge the Law, you aren’t keeping the Law, but sitting in judgment on it. One of the commandments is to rest on the Sabbath. Many Christians today say that Sabbath has been done away with, contradicting ישוע in [Matthew 5.17-19](#).

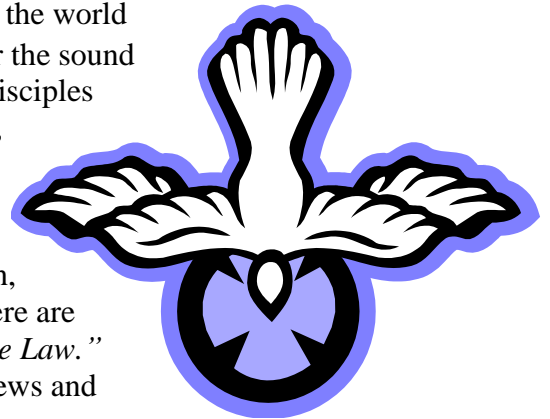


Mandatory שבועות is one of the שלוש רגלים *Shalosh Regalim* Three Pilgrimages to Jerusalem as commanded in [Exodus 23.14-16](#) and [Deuteronomy 16.16](#). Since the destruction of the Temple, the trip to Jerusalem is no longer considered mandatory, but the celebration is. רגל *regel* is the word for leg/limb/shank, and also holiday/pilgrim/festival/time. The plural is רגלים *regalim*. Perhaps the word is the same for feet and pilgrimages, since, before El Al, any trip to Jerusalem required walking! The other two שלוש רגלים are Passover/First Fruits/Unleavened Bread in the spring and Trumpets/Atonement/Tabernacles in the fall.

Which Date? שבועות is dated by counting fifty days (hence *Pentecost*) after the day of rest after Passover, [Leviticus 23.15-16](#). But the Pharisees and Sadducees disagreed over which day of rest, and this would affect the date for שבועות. If the special Shabbat the day after Passover is meant, verses 6-7, the 15th of Nisan, then שבועות would always fall on the 6th of Sivan, and this is what the Pharisees believed. But if the regular Shabbat after Passover is intended, which could be one to seven days after Passover, the date for שבועות would fluctuate, and this is what the Sadducees believed. In either case, שבועות falls on the Roman calendar in late May or early June.

Courage Because of ישוע The ICEJ says that שבועות demonstrates our need for a Mediator. Our sinful lives compared to תורה emphasize our separation from God. We mock God by our lives and we attract His wrath. Only ישוע can stand in the gap for us, taking this wrath upon Himself, so that we can stand in God's presence. It is at the שבועות after the resurrection of ישוע in [Acts 2](#) that the disciples get filled with courage from God to replace fear of men.

Zealous for תורה At that שבועות, Jews from all over the world arrive *in one place* in Jerusalem at the Temple. They hear the sound of a *rushing mighty wind* and *tongues of fire*. When the disciples speak with tongues so that everyone can understand them, Peter explains that the disciples are not drunk, as some in the crowd think, since it was only the *third hour* of the day. 3,000 souls are added to their number, then up to 5,000 in Acts 4. In Acts 6.7 the number increases again, with many priests coming to faith. And in Acts 21.20, there are tens of thousands of Jews who believe, all “*zealous for the Law.*” Quite different from today, when most believers are not Jews and most think that the Law has been tossed!



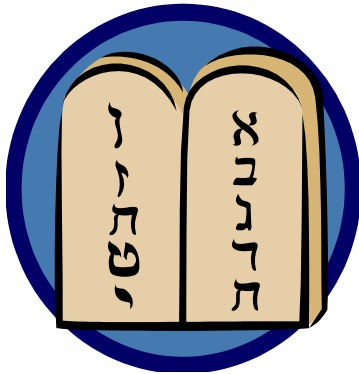
It's traditional on the night before שבועות for observant Jews to stay up all night to read from Exodus and Ezekiel about the fire falling and from Ruth about a foreigner marrying into ישראל and joining Messiah's line. [Exodus 19.16-19](#) describes *fire* falling on Mt. Sinai with the giving of the Law. [Ezekiel 1.4](#) describes his vision of a *whirlwind* and *fire*. More *rushing* in [Ezekiel 3.12-13](#). In [Ezekiel 36.26-27](#), God puts into His faithful a new רוּחַ *ruach* wind/breath/mind/spirit, a heart of flesh, and His Spirit—what we call the רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ *Ruach HaKodesh* Holy Spirit, so that believers can walk in God's statutes, keep His judgments, and אֲמֵן them! Not to toss them as “just Old Testament.” Not to shoot the Tutor, but to internalize the Law. With the Spirit, not contrary to the Spirit. ***With grace to do the Law, not grace to ignore the Law!***

More Zeal King David says in [Psalm 119.53](#), “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy תורה.” What would he think of a modern Christian? Again he says in [Psalm 119.126](#), “It is time for thee, יהוה, to work: for they have made void thy תורה.” Is it OK to void תורה by saying ישוע fulfilled it so we can shoot it?

שבועות at the Temple The Temple was destroyed in 70 AD. What is the Temple today? In [1 Corinthians 3.16](#), Paul says that ἐστὲ *este* you (second person plural present indicative—not individuals, but all believers together) are the Temple of God. So as [Hebrews 10.25](#) says, don’t forsake the ἐπισυναγωγὴ *episynagōgē* assembling of yourselves together. Synagogue together to meet God!

One pastor I know says that believers are like porcupines getting together—if everyone isn’t really careful, people get hurt. Another pastor says that believers are like rocks. Left alone, we are rough and unpolished. But tumble us together for a long time and we come out smooth and shiny! Synagogue-ing isn’t always fun—but it’s necessary.

On the first שבועות, Moses receives the תורה on tablets of stone. Over the next 1,500 years, the תורה is carefully maintained on scrolls. On the שבועות after the resurrection of ישוע, the disciples receive the תורה written on their hearts.



3,500 Years Ago



3,500 Years Ago—2,000 Years Ago



2,000 Years Ago—Today








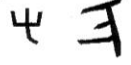
We and Ruth are Grafted into יִשְׂרָאֵל The other book many Jews read the night before **שבועות** is Ruth. An Israelite couple moves to Moab in a time of famine and has two sons, oddly named **מַחֲלוֹן** *Mahlon* sick and **כִּלְיוֹן** *Chilion* pining/wasting away, who both die (note to parents: give care to naming your children) after their dad dies and then after marrying Moabite women, one of whom is **רוּת** *Root* Ruth/Friendship. An implication is that if the dad had lived, then he would not have allowed his Israelite sons to marry foreign women. Marrying a foreign woman is forbidden because it could lead an Israelite into pagan idolatry, [Exodus 34.15-16](#) warns. This is exactly what happens with Moabite women in [Numbers 25](#), resulting in God's judgment. But the foreign-born, pagan, Moabite Ruth returns to **יִשְׂרָאֵל** with her mother-in-law Naomi, accepts the God of **יִשְׂרָאֵל** as her own, and becomes the great-grandmother of King David, also placing herself in the ancestral line of **יִשׁוּעַ**. Ruth's name **רוּת** has the symbolic meaning of: **ר** *resh* head/person + **ו** *vav* nail/establish + **ת** *tav* cross/covenant = person who establishes the cross/covenant.

Although Ruth's sister, **עֲרַפָּה** *Orpah* Gazelle, turns and runs away from Naomi, [Ruth 1.14](#) says, “**וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ** *v'Root davkah bah* but Ruth clung to her.” Ruth **דָּבְקָה**. She also says to Naomi, “Where you die, I will die...” Orpah and Ruth are types of Gentiles relating to **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. One turns and runs away like a gazelle. One will **דָּבַק** and pursue hard after **יִשְׂרָאֵל** for friendship. Politically, it seems more and more easy to run away from **יִשְׂרָאֵל**. Are you **עֲרַפָּה** or **רוּת**?



Gift of תורה We are trained in the Church not to think of תורה as a gift. We tend to think of it more as a burden, a curse which grace allows us to toss. But God gives it, Moses faithfully teaches it, King David loves it, the prophets rebuke those who forsake it, ישוע validates it, and [Proverbs 28.9](#) says that if anyone turns a deaf ear to it, his prayers are an abomination!

Hidden Meaning Hebrew is the only language in the world that is both pictures like Chinese and letters like English. See the article from [Biblical Archaeology Review](#) for the origins of the Hebrew Aleph-Bet. One way to read the letters in תורה:

22		TAV ת		to seal, to covenant	SIGN t
6		VAV ו		'and', to add, to secure	NAIL, PEG v
20		REYSH ר		a person, the head, the highest	HEAD (OF A MAN) r
5		HEY ה		'the', to reveal	BEHOLD h

“The covenant is secured by the Highest Person who reveals it” or backward,
“Behold! The Highest Person nailed to the cross!”

ישוע says that everything concerning Him in the תורה, Prophets, and Psalms must be fulfilled, [Luke 24.44](#). תורה is a gift that brings us closer to ישוע. And שבועות is the day that God gives ישראל both תורה and Spirit.

תורה

Glossary, in order of appearance:

שבועות	<i>Shavuot</i>	Feast of Weeks—Pentecost
דבק	<i>dabaq</i>	cleave/be joined together/pursue hard after
ישראל	<i>Yisra'el</i>	Israel
תורה	<i>Torah</i>	Law/Instruction
ישוע	<i>Yeshua</i>	Jesus/salvation
יהוה	<i>YHVH</i>	the LORD
אמן	<i>aman</i>	believe
אמן	<i>amen</i>	verily/truly/amen/so be it
שלוש רגלים	<i>Shalosh Regalim</i>	Three Pilgrimages
רגל	<i>regel</i>	leg/limb/shank
רגלים	<i>regalim</i>	legs
רוח	<i>ruach</i>	wind/breath/mind/spirit
רוח הקדש	<i>Ruach HaKodesh</i>	Holy Spirit
ἐστε	<i>este</i>	you, second person plural present indicative
ἐπισυναγωγή	<i>episynagōgē</i>	assembling
מחלון	<i>Mahlon</i>	sick
כליון	<i>Chilion</i>	pinning/wasting away
רות	<i>Root</i>	Ruth/friendship person who establishes the covenant
ר	<i>resh</i>	head/person
ו	<i>vav</i>	nail/establish
ת	<i>tav</i>	cross/covenant
ערפה	<i>Orpah</i>	Orpah/gazelle
ורות דבקה בה	<i>v'Root davkah bah</i>	but Ruth clung to her