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SHAVUOT

Shavuot ([listen](#) [help·info](#)), or **Shavuos** ([listen](#) [help·info](#)) in some [Ashkenazi](#) usage ([Hebrew](#): שבועות, lit. "Weeks"), known in English as the Feast of Weeks, is a [Jewish holiday](#) that occurs on the sixth day of the Hebrew month of [Sivan](#) (it may fall between May 15 and June 14 on the Gregorian calendar). In the Bible, Shavuot marks the wheat harvest in the [Land of Israel](#) ([Exodus 34:22](#)) and according to the [Jewish Sages](#), it also commemorates the anniversary of the [giving of the Torah](#) by God to the [Children of Israel](#) at [Mount Sinai](#) in 1314 BCE. Rabbinic writings state that, in addition, the [Oral Torah](#) was given to Moses at [Mount Sinai](#), which, according to the tradition of [Orthodox Judaism](#), occurred in 1314 BCE. The Orthodox rabbinic tradition holds that the [Written Torah](#) was

recorded during the following forty years.^[2]

The word *Shavuot* means "weeks", and it marks the conclusion of the [Counting of the Omer](#). Its date is directly linked to that of [Passover](#); the Torah mandates the seven-week Counting of the Omer, beginning on the second day of Passover, to be immediately followed by Shavuot. This counting of days and weeks is understood to express anticipation and desire for the

giving of the Torah. On Passover, the people of Israel were freed from their enslavement to Pharaoh; on Shavuot, they were given the Torah and became a nation committed to serving God.^[3]

While it is sometimes referred to as [Pentecost](#) (in [Koinē Greek](#): Πεντηκοστή) due to its timing after Passover, "pentecost" meaning "fifty" in Greek, since Shavuot occurs fifty days after the first day of [Passover](#), it is not the same

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as the [Christian Pentecost](#).^[4] ^[Note 1]^[5]

One of the biblically ordained [Three Pilgrimage Festivals](#), Shavuot is traditionally celebrated in the [Land of Israel](#) for one day and for [two days](#) in the [Diaspora](#). While there is more awareness of the festival in Israel among [secular Jews](#), generally Shavuot is widely ignored by non-practising Jews.

SIGNIFICANCE

Agricultural (wheat harvest)^[edit]

Shavuot is not explicitly named as the day on which the Torah was revealed by God to the Israelite nation at Mount Sinai in the Bible, although this is

commonly considered to be its main significance.^[9]^[10]

What is textually connected in the Bible to the Feast of Shavuot is the season of the grain harvest, specifically of the wheat, in the [Land of Israel](#). In ancient

times, the grain harvest lasted seven weeks and was a season of gladness ([Jer. 5:24](#), [Deut. 16:9–11](#), [Isa. 9:2](#)). It began with the harvesting of the barley during Passover and ended with the

harvesting of the wheat at Shavuot. Shavuot was thus the concluding festival of the grain harvest, just as the eighth day of [Sukkot](#) (Tabernacles) was the concluding festival of the fruit harvest. During the existence of the [Temple in Jerusalem](#), an [offering](#) of two loaves of bread from the wheat harvest was made on Shavuot.^[5]

The one but last [Qumran Scroll](#) to be published has been discovered to contain two festival dates observed by the Qumran sect as part of their formally perfect 364-day calendar, and dedicated to "New Wine" and "New Oil", neither of which are mentioned in the [Hebrew Bible](#), but were known from another Qumran manuscript, the [Temple Scroll](#). These festivals

"constituted an extension of the festival of Shavuot..., which celebrates the New Wheat". All three festivals are calculated starting from the first Sabbath following Passover, by repeatedly adding exactly 50 days each time: first came New Wheat (Shavuot), then New Wine, and then New Oil.^[11] (See also below, at ["The Book of Jubilees and the Essenes"](#).)

Scriptural^[edit]

Names in the Torah^[edit]

In the Bible, Shavuot is called the "Festival of Weeks" ([Hebrew](#): חג השבועות, *Chag HaShavuot*, [Exodus 34:22](#), [Deuteronomy 16:10](#)); "Festival of Reaping" (חג הקציר, *Chag HaKatzir*, [Exodus 23:16](#)),^[12] and "Day of the First Fruits" (יום

הבכורים, *Yom*

HaBikkurim, [Numbers 28:26](#)).^[13]

Shavuot, the plural of a word meaning "week" or "seven," alludes to the fact that this festival happens exactly seven weeks (i.e. "a week of weeks") after Passover.^[14]

In the Talmud^[edit]

The [Talmud](#) refers to Shavuot as 'Aseret ([Hebrew](#): עשרת,^[15] "refraining" or "holding back",^[16] referring to the prohibition against work on this holiday^[16] and to the conclusion of the holiday and season of Passover.^[17] Since Shavuot occurs 50 days after Passover, [Hellenistic Jews](#) gave it the name "Pentecost" ([Koinē Greek](#): Πεντηκοστή, "fiftieth [day](#)").

