

Why we read the book of Ruth on Shavuot שבועות

Main Themes of Shavuot – The giving of the Torah (the Ten Commandments), which is often seen as a picture of a wedding between God and His people. The commandment to count from the Barley Harvest to the Wheat Harvest links this season deeply with grain — the seed — and the theme of spiritual growth and fruitfulness.

Shavuot coincides with the wheat harvest in Israel, which is the very setting of the Book of Ruth. The events of Ruth unfold in the fields, with daily life revolving around harvesting and gleaning.

From Passover -more specifically from the Day of the Waiving of the Barley - to Shavuot we are commanded to count the omer – an omer is a measure of grain. We are to count the omer for 50 days or for 7 shabbats (weeks) and the day after the 7th shabbat is a holy convocation, Shavuot.

In the story of Ruth, we encounter the theme of **redemption** through a גואל **kinsman redeemer**. According to Torah law, the closest male relative has both the right and the responsibility to redeem family land that has been sold, and to marry the widow of a deceased relative who had no children. The firstborn of such a union would be considered the heir of the deceased, carrying on his name and inheriting his land.

Boaz is a foreshadowing — a type — of the Messiah.

Yeshua came as our **kinsman redeemer**, paying the price for our redemption. Through Him, we are brought into the **covenant of Israel**, welcomed into the nation, and given a share in the inheritance. Like Ruth, we were once outsiders, but through Messiah, we are grafted in — able to live by the laws and customs of the household and become one with His family.

As we celebrate Shavuot — the giving of the Torah and the gift of the Spirit — we remember Ruth, a gentile brought into the covenant, and Boaz, a redeemer who points us to Yeshua. Ruth takes a submissive position with Boaz- at his feet, but also asking by the tailor covering gesture what is cannot be openly asked for.

Yeshua speaks of the fields of wheat in his ministry.

Matthew 9:37–38

“Then He said to His disciples, ‘The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into His harvest.’”

John 4:35–36

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages and gathers fruit for eternal life...”

- Spoken at the well with the Samaritan woman — a Gentile outsider like Ruth.
- Beautifully shows how the "field" includes those outside Israel.

Matthew 13:24–30 – Parable of the Wheat and Tares

“The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field...”

- Explains how wheat (true believers) and tares (false) grow together until the harvest (end of the age).
- Boaz and Ruth’s story is about choosing righteousness amidst a morally unstable time (Judges era).

Matthew 13:3–9 / 18–23 – Parable of the Sower

“Some seed fell on good soil and yielded a crop...”

- Connects the idea of the **Word as seed**, and our hearts as the field.
- Shavuot is traditionally seen as the giving of Torah → planting of the Word.

1 Corinthians 15:20–23

“Messiah has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep...”

- Yeshua as **firstfruits** links the omer counting to resurrection.
- Ruth’s story ends in life (a child), just as Yeshua’s redemption brings life from death.
- **Pentecost / Acts 2** happens on Shavuot — the Spirit is poured out like rain upon the harvest.
- Reversal of Babel – people divided by language – at Pentecost they are united by language.
- **Ruth as the bride** awaiting the redeemer → we as the **bride of Messiah** awaiting His return. (Link to the story of the virgins of the book of revelation (half not prepared))
- **Gleaning** → Messiah’s heart for the poor, the foreigner, and the widow (Luke 4:18–19).

So when we count the omer from **Yeshua’s resurrection (Firstfruits)** to **Shavuot**, we are not just counting grain — we’re marking the spiritual journey:

- From **redemption (Passover)**,
- To **new life (Firstfruits resurrection)**,
- To **empowerment and covenant (Shavuot / the giving of the Spirit)**.

It reflects **Israel’s journey** from the Exodus to Mount Sinai, and our **personal journey** from salvation, to new birth, to receiving the Torah written on our hearts.

Temple Service on Shavuot (Feast of Weeks)

- Commemorates the **giving of the Torah** at Mount Sinai — often seen as a **wedding between God and Israel**.
- Marks the **wheat harvest** and the **end of the omer count** (Leviticus 23:15–21).
- Also called **Yom HaBikkurim** – the **Day of Firstfruits** for the wheat harvest.

Temple Offerings and Rituals

Element	Description	Scripture
 Two Wheat Loaves (Shte HaLechem) שתי הלהם	- Baked with leaven (unique!) - Waved before the LORD - Not burned on altar - Eaten by priests	Leviticus 23:17
 Burnt Offerings (Olah) עולה	- 2 young bulls - 1 ram - 7 yearling lambs - With grain + drink offerings	Numbers 28:26–27
 Sin Offering (Chatat) חטאת from the word chayt, meaning "missing the mark."	1 male goat	Numbers 28:30
 Peace Offerings (Shelamim) שלמים	2 lambs waved with the loaves	Leviticus 23:19–20
 Firstfruits (Bikkurim) בכורים	Beginning of the firstfruits offering of the 7 species (Deut. 8:8) Brought in decorated baskets with celebration	Deuteronomy 26:1–11
 Pilgrimage חג	One of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals All males to appear before the LORD in Jerusalem	Deuteronomy 16:16
 Readings (Post-Temple)	- Ten Commandments (Exodus 19–20) - Book of Ruth (due to harvest theme and redemption)	Traditional

Spiritual Reflection

- **Yeshua as the Firstfruits** (1 Corinthians 15:20–23) — His resurrection on the Day of Firstfruits begins the spiritual harvest.
- The **two loaves** symbolised the two tablets a marriage certificate Ketubah .
- Shavuot also marks the **giving of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 2) — the Spirit writing Torah on our hearts. Which is again the offering for a wedding and an in grafting, and redemption