

Conflict at the Feast of Booths

The most joyous of all festive seasons in Isra'el was that of **the feast of Booths** or **Sukkoth**. It fell on a time of year when the hearts of the people would naturally be full of thankfulness, gladness, and expectancy. All the crops had been long stored; and now all fruit had been gathered, the vintage past, and the Land only awaited the softening and refreshment of the "latter rain," to prepare it for a new crop. It was appropriate that when the start of the harvest had been blessed by offering the first ripe sheaf of barley, and the full ingathering of the corn by the two wave-loaves, there should then be a harvest feast of thankfulness and gladness to **ADONAI**.⁹²⁷

Arnold Fruchtenbaum discusses the prophetic view of **the seven feasts of Isra'el**. He observes that **the program of the First Coming of Messiah** fulfilled the first four feasts. **The first four feasts** come within fifty days of each other. **The feast of the Passover** was fulfilled by the death of **the Meshiach**; **the feast of Unleavened Bread** was fulfilled by the sinlessness of His sacrifice; **the feast of Firstfruits** was fulfilled by the resurrection of **Jesus**; **the feast of Shavu'ot** was fulfilled by the birth of the Church. This ends **the first cycle of feasts**, which were fulfilled in the program of the First Coming.

Between **the first four** and the last three **feasts** there was a **four-month** interval mentioned in passing in **Leviticus 23:22**. It was a pause between the two sets of **feasts** during which time life was to continue along normal lines. It is pictured as a summertime of labor in the fields in preparation for the final **harvest** of the summer and before the fall **harvest** would come.

When you reap the harvest of your Land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I AM the LORD your God (Leviticus 23:22).

It is a one-verse statement that is not related to any **feast**. It almost seems like an unnecessary interruption unless it is understood what is really happening. It is the pause between **the feasts** that are fulfilled by the program of the First Coming as opposed to **the feasts** to be fulfilled by the program of the Second Coming. This four-month interval pictures the insertion of the Dispensation of Grace (see my commentary on **Hebrews**), which interrupts the program of **the seven Feasts of Isra'el**. Indeed, **the gleanings for the poor and the foreigner** are a very good illustration of the mission of the Church itself. John writes of **Yeshua** saying to His talmidim: **Don't you have a saying, "It's still four months**

until harvest?" **I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest (John 4:35).** Yes, this **four-month** interval becomes a fitting symbol of the obligation of the Church, made up of Jewish and Gentile believers, to evangelize the world (**Matthew 28:18-20**). So **Leviticus 23:22** is a parenthetical verse, representing the current age in which we now live, in which the program of **the Feasts of Israel** have been temporarily interrupted.

The last three feasts in **the second cycle of feasts** also all come together, even closer together than those of **the first cycle of feasts**. In fact, they all come within two weeks of each other. **The last three of these feasts** of second cycle are to be fulfilled by the program of the Second Coming of **Yeshua ha-Mashiach**.

The feast of Trumpets will be fulfilled by the Rapture of the Church; the Great Tribulation will fulfill **the Day of Atonement**; the messianic Kingdom will fulfill **the feast of Sukkot**. Just as **the feast of Booths** is a time of rejoicing following the affliction of **the Day of Atonement**, even so the messianic Kingdom is to be a time of rejoicing following the afflictions of the Great Tribulation.⁹²⁸