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Conflict at the Feast of Booths



The most joyous of all festive seasons in **Isra'el** was that of **the Feast of Booths** or **Sukkot**. 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 First Fruits** 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**, **to see link click Bp - The Dispensation of Grace**), 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 Isra'el** 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

We have all heard the questions from our Jewish friends or family: If **Yeshua** is the real **Messiah**, why didn't **He** fulfill all the promises of the Scriptures? Why are there still wars and problems if the **Messiah** has already come? Good questions indeed if you stop and think about it! Yet many of us have found sufficient answers as we began to study the Scriptures more carefully. Although many of Jews presume that **Yeshua** cannot fit the description of **the Messiah**, even the classical rabbis could see that the larger question of **Mashiach** was not so easily answered. The fact is that there appears to be two contrasting pictures of what **the Messiah** would do when **He** comes to **Isra'el**. No doubt, **the Mashiach** would establish

an everlasting Kingdom of peace and blessing with headquarters **in Jerusalem (Isaiah 11; Micah 4)**. Yet, in seeming opposition to this, many other Scriptures speak of a suffering **Messiah** who is rejected by many people (**Isaiah 53; Daniel 9**).

Many of the early rabbis were puzzled by these statements and wondered how could these two aspects could possibly be reconciled in one person (see [My - The Jewish Concept of Two Messiahs](#)). A proposed solution is put forth various times that there must be in fact two different Messiahs coming to fulfill the two differing job descriptions. **They called the King Messiah “Mashiach Ben David” since he would be the greater son of David. The suffering one was designated as “Mashiach Ben Yosef” since he appears to suffering much in the same manner as Joseph (Jacob’s son) in the book of Genesis (Babylonian Talmud Sukkah 52a).**

As we approach the High Holy Days, I believe there is some important evidence that is often overlooked in regard to **Messiah’s** two-fold ministry. **Sukkot (The Feast of Booths)**, besides being a celebration of the fall harvest, is also understood to be a prophetic picture of the Kingdom of **Messiah**. We build our **Sukkot/temporary huts** to remind us of the great truth that the day is coming when **Messiah** will “dwell or tabernacle” in our midst and fulfill the promises as the son of David. This must be the reason that Prophets foretell of the Kingdom celebration of this feast among all the redeemed, both Jew and non-Jew: **Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16)**. It makes sense that **Sukkot** will be the preeminent feast in the Kingdom since **Messiah** is now dwelling with **His** people!

Yet within this Fall feast is also hidden the secondary aspect of **Messiah’s** work; namely **His** suffering for the atonement of our sins. This means that there must be some kind of connection between **Sukkot** and the First Coming of **the Messiah** as the Messianic Jews would see it. I find it interesting that there has always been some debate about when **Yeshua** was actually born in the world. Most Western Christians celebrate Christmas on December 25 as the designated day to remember **the Messiah’s** First Coming. Perhaps many people, both Jews and Gentiles, have overlooked the important holy day of **Sukkot** as **God’s** time to celebrate the First Coming of **Messiah** as well? As the Jewish believer wrote in the first century: **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt (literally, tabernacled) among us (John 1:1 and 14)**.

The last day of **Sukkot** is an additional festival day that the Torah calls **The Eighth Day**

(see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Gp - On the Last and Greatest Day of the Feast](#)). If **Yeshua** was born on the first day of **the feast of Booths**, they must have circumcised **Him** on the day called the “Eighth Day,” thereby literally fulfilling the scripture which says: **On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised (Lev 12:3)**.

How perfect! As the writer thinks of the First Coming of **Yeshua**, he makes the connection to our ancient feast of **Sukkot**. Indeed, **Messiah** dwelt with **His** people at **His** First Coming to **Isra’el** as **Ben Yosef**. Through **His** death and resurrection, **Yeshua** of Nazareth is able to fulfill the other aspect of the **Messianic** call as **Ben David**. **He** is returning soon to complete the whole plan of **the Father**. By Rabbi Barney Kasdan