

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Interview 34: "Michael Norten on the Feasts of Israel"**

© 2013 Lamb & Lion Ministries. All Rights Reserved.

For a video of this show, please visit <http://www.lamblion.com>.

#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** Ever since the Law of Moses was given to the Jewish people about 3,500 years ago, they have been observing a system of seven feasts; four in the Spring of the year and three in the Fall. They continue to observe those feasts today. The feasts relate to the agricultural cycle, but they are also memorials of great events in Jewish history. But could the feast also have prophetic importance that relates to both to the First and Second Comings of the Messiah? Stay tuned for an interview with an expert on the feasts.

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy! I am delighted to have with me today my colleague Nathan Jones, and our special guest Michael Norten.

**Nathan Jones:** Hey, Michael good to meet you. Glad you're on Christ in Prophecy.

**Michael Norten:** Thank you very much.

**Nathan Jones:** I am glad you brought your book, *Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts*. I hear though you are a businessman, so what's a businessman's credentials have to do with the feasts?

**Michael Norten:** Well actually I lived three lives. I am a financial advisor for MetLife for 33 years and also had a TV show called the *Garden Guy*. I teach and put lectures on Organic Gardening and Farming.

**Nathan Jones:** Excellent.

**Michael Norten:** And also I graduated from Dallas Theological Seminary in the early 70's and I was in the pastorate for two churches. And then I have taught the Scriptures for over 40 years. And I was on the staff of several ministries, one being Campus Crusade for Christ.

**Nathan Jones:** Awesome.

**Dr. Reagan:** Boy you sound like a renaissance man.

**Nathan Jones:** Really. Well feasts, gardening I can see the combination.

**Michael Norten:** It all comes together.

**Nathan Jones:** It all comes together.

**Dr. Reagan:** But basically you've been a student of the Bible all your life.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** OK. Well I tell you I am so excited about your book, *Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts*; and the subtitle is, *The Prophecies in the Feasts of Leviticus*, right?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** You know one of the things that really hooked me on that book when I started reading it was you actually came to me before you had it published and had me read the manuscript. But you didn't have something in it at that point, and that was the preface. And when I got the book and I read the preface I think I laughed for the next 30 minutes because you told three stories: (1) How you got interested in prophecy. (2) How you got interested in the feasts. (3) How you got interested in writing. Tell us those stories.

**Michael Norten:** Well it is interesting I decided when I was in college back in the 60's I decided that I wanted to take an adventurous train trip to Mexico City.

**Dr. Reagan:** What was this a missions trip?

**Michael Norten:** Basically a missions trip and everyone said, "Oh you've got to be careful there's desperados, they rob people on the trains.

**Dr. Reagan:** Absolutely.

**Michael Norten:** And so I had a big imagination and I was nervous and I was looking around and I was going to spot those desperados before they spotted me.

**Dr. Reagan:** So what did you do did you drive down to Juarez?

**Michael Norten:** Laredo.

**Dr. Reagan:** Laredo.

**Michael Norten:** And then down to Mexico City, two days on the train.

**Dr. Reagan:** Two days on the train.

**Michael Norten:** Two days. And I saw a gentleman that had long-hair, and big mustache and a stern look on his face. And he had been around the block a few times. I thought, "There's one of those desperados." And I was watching him. And I noticed some people were coming to talk to him. And I thought, "Now this is interesting they may be planning their heist." So I walked over to find out what they were talking about thinking I would know Spanish. And he was talking about prophecy. He was talking about the Rapture, Tribulation Period, and the Millennial

Kingdom. I thought, "This is interesting." And so I started asking him questions. And I said where can I learn more about this prophecy? And he said, "You might start by going to Dallas Theological Seminary." And he introduced himself as Hal Lindsey.

**Dr. Reagan:** So Hal Lindsey was your bandito, huh?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And that is amazing.

**Michael Norten:** It was. And so later on I did go to Dallas Seminary. And one day I decided to, a bunch of our friends would go out to lunch after church at this place called *Shakey's Pizza*. And people, friends, and strangers alike would all sit together at the same table. And I was sitting there and there was a gentleman right in front of me, he was a bald headed gentleman, and he had a sheepish grin on his face, and smoke was coming out the back of his head. And I said, "Sir, do you realize there is smoke coming out of the back of your head?" He got so embarrassed and he pulled out this cigarette. "Well I'm a Jew and I have just accepted Jesus as my Messiah. I believe in Jesus as my Messiah. I didn't know how church people thought about smoking. When I saw you church people I decided to hide it." And we had a laugh over that. And I asked him, "What came to you to believe in Jesus as your Messiah?" And he told me about prophecy again and how they were fulfilled. I thought, "This is fascinating how he came to see this." And then as we were leaving he says, "Oh, by the way the secrets are in the feasts." And that lodged in my memory all the secrets are in the feasts. This gentleman was Zola Levitt.

**Dr. Reagan:** Oh, no. This was shortly after he had become a Christian?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Nathan Jones:** And he knew that all ready?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** If our viewers don't know Zola Levitt later became one of the leading Messianic Jewish teachers and television personalities in America.

**Michael Norten:** Incredible.

**Dr. Reagan:** Writer and all.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** So you were introduced to prophecy by Hal Lindsey. You were introduced to the feasts by Zola Levitt.

**Michael Norten:** By Zola Levitt.

**Dr. Reagan:** Alright now the third step.

**Michael Norten:** And then quite a number of years later I was sitting in this restaurant.

**Dr. Reagan:** Where was this here in Texas?

**Michael Norten:** Here in Texas. And I noticed that a gentleman that was sitting at a table next to mine was Tim LaHaye because I recognized him from the book he wrote on the Left Behind series. And so I started talking to him about prophecy. Obviously I have to talk about something, here he was. And I started sharing with him some of things that I ignored about the feasts because I at one time they asked me to teach a series of seven lectures on the Scriptures. And I thought, "Well there are seven feasts." And they said, "You teach on the feasts." And I realized I didn't know anything about the feasts. And so I asked my colleagues, they didn't know anything about the feasts. So I went to the Rabbis some Messianic, some non-Messianic and said, "Please teach me on the feasts." And they poured out their heart to me and I started connecting the dots. And I said, "I found the mother-lode." And it was so exciting, and so I started sharing with Tim LaHaye what I had learned. He says, "We've never heard this. We are not taught this. You need to write a book this is incredible." "Well I've never written a book." "Oh, well let me teach you how to write a book." And I said, "Oh, he sold more books than Harry Potter. He is going to teach me how to write a book." And so we sat down and that's how I got to write the book.

**Dr. Reagan:** Wow, I tell you I can just see the Lord's hand in all that. Hal Lindsey introduced you to prophecy; Zola Levitt to the feasts. And then you run across Tim LaHaye who has this heart for writing and touching people's hearts through writing and he encourages you to write. And so you wrote.

**Michael Norten:** That's right. And as I teach the feasts and people read about the feasts. What I've learned from the rabbis they are just as excited about it as I am.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well I want us to come back in just a moment and you tell us something's about the feasts. Ok?

## Part 2

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy. Dr. Reagan and I are in the process of interviewing Michael Norten concerning his new book about the Feasts of Israel. Michael can you tell us a little bit about the overview of the Feasts of Israel; and what are they about, and when do they occur?

**Michael Norten:** Yes, we have seven feasts. And we have the first four feasts are what we call the Spring feasts. And then we have the last three feasts we call the Fall feasts. Now we have Passover and then we have the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And then we have the Feast of First Fruits, and then Pentecost. Now Pentecost is the same Feast in the Old Testament called the Feast of Weeks.

**Dr. Reagan:** Before you go to the Fall. On those Spring feasts the first three are very close together aren't they?

**Michael Norten:** Yes, very close together and you've got 50 days after the Feast of First Fruits to Pentecost.

**Dr. Reagan:** So that would put Pentecost in what, May, June?

**Michael Norten:** It's almost in the Summer. And then we have the Fall feasts. The longest period of time between the feasts and that has significance too. But then we have the Feasts of Trumpets which we call Rosh Hashanah.

**Dr. Reagan:** And that is in September or October.

**Michael Norten:** About September, later part of September. And then we have the Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement we call it. And then five days later we celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

**Nathan Jones:** What book of the Bible were these feasts established?

**Michael Norten:** Oh, Leviticus 23.

**Nathan Jones:** And you can find all seven in Leviticus 23?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Nathan Jones:** Ok, fascinating. Now there all tied to an agricultural system too, right?

**Michael Norten:** Yes, in fact the Spring feasts, first as you know the Passover was to remind them of how God got them out of Egypt. And then the Feast of Unleavened Bread is to remind them of the swiftness of leaving Egypt.

**Dr. Reagan:** Why does it do that? Why does it remind them of the swiftness?

**Michael Norten:** Well because they didn't have time for leavening the bread. They had to travel with unleavened bread. But that has so much more significance to the Jews and to us now. As I share in my book. And then we have the Feast of First Fruits which is incredible, that is the barley harvest. And then after that when we have the Feast and of course that is the First Fruits is a big, big event. And then we have the Feast of Pentecost, and that is the wheat harvest. Now these feasts were not observed until they were into the land of course.

**Nathan Jones:** Ok, so they waited 40 years?

**Michael Norten:** Right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Now how did the feasts get the name Pentecost?

**Michael Norten:** Because of the 50 days between from the Feast of First Fruits to that feast.

**Dr. Reagan:** That is a Greek term pente.

**Michael Norten:** Yes Pentecost. And of course it has to do with the Jubilee and the Sabbaths, and that is and they would count what they call the omer which I explain which is very significant.

**Dr. Reagan:** Then you have something like a five month period there before you get to the Fall feasts.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, right.

**Dr. Reagan:** Now how do the Fall feasts relate either to the agricultural cycle, or to history?

**Michael Norten:** Well it's interesting because five in the Jewish system is always symbolic of God's grace. And what we call the Silent Years in our time of the Fall feasts when we relate it to Christ. But the Fall feasts are interesting because the Feast of Trumpets is the New Year, the Jewish New Year and they celebrate that. And then we have the Day of Atonement where they would get forgiven, or get their sins covered for another year. Then the significance from the harvest part is the Feast of Tabernacles when not only did it remind of how God took care of them in the wilderness. It was also a time of celebration; all the harvests were finished, including the fruit harvest of the Fall. And their vats were full, and the barns were full and they could celebrate God's provision.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, that's a wonderful celebration time in Israel.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** It's a time when everybody takes off for a week. It's kind of like our Thanksgiving.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** Except it is a week long and they go to the beach, and they go to Galilee and they take off from work.

**Michael Norten:** It's a great time.

**Nathan Jones:** Do you think God tied these feasts to the harvest to remind the people to celebrate them?

**Michael Norten:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Because it all has to do with God's provision.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well in a few minutes we are going to talk about the prophetic significance of these feasts. Before we do that go back and tell us something about each one of these feasts. Your book is so full of insights about the feasts. Give us some nuggets here about some of these feasts from a Jewish viewpoint and all that stuff.

**Nathan Jones:** Like the Passover, there is a part about the wood that is kind of like the cross, can you tell me about that?

**Michael Norten:** Yes, it's interesting Justin Martyr had brought this out in his writings that when the lamb was sacrificed.

**Dr. Reagan:** The Passover lamb.

**Michael Norten:** The Passover lamb in the Temple they would put it on a pomegranate pole and they would have a crossbar to hold it up. And they would take his innards and wrap it around his head. And when they would look at it, it was very much an appearance of Christ on the cross; our Passover lamb.

**Dr. Reagan:** Oh, man isn't that something.

**Nathan Jones:** That gives me goose bumps.

**Dr. Reagan:** Well let's talk some about the other feasts from the Jewish viewpoint.

**Michael Norten:** Well I would like to mention too what was very fascinating to me was the Passover lamb because remember when the angel came to the shepherds and said, "Go into Bethlehem and you'll find the baby wrapped in cloths, and in a manger. That will be a sign for you." Did you ever wonder why that was a sign?

**Dr. Reagan:** Yeah, sure I've wondered.

**Michael Norten:** Well I didn't even wonder. Well I just thought, "Well that sounds nice." Well I found out from the Rabbis it was an incredible sign because in Micah 5:2 it said that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. But it also in Micah 4:8 said he would be announced at Migdal Eder; guard tower of the flock. And a friend of mine who does excavating in Israel said that they had discovered the remains of Migdal Eder- guard tower of the flocks.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, that's right.

**Michael Norten:** It's outside of Bethlehem about five miles, and it was a two-story tower. And the shepherds would look out at the field and see the sheep far off. And on the bottom floor they would bring in the pregnant sheep to assist in the birthing. Why? It's because they were not the lowly shepherds that we think of; they were priests that worked at the Temple that were doing shepherding work to make sure the lambs were born without blemish for sacrifice at the Temple. So when the lamb was born they would take strips of cloths that they made from recycled priestly undergarments. And they would wrap the lamb tightly so it wouldn't get blemished. And then they would place it up on the manger so it wouldn't get trampled. So when the shepherds, the priestly shepherds saw the baby Jesus prepared just like their lambs, their Passover lambs. They said this, they went absolutely ballistic, "This is the Lamb of God prepared for sacrifice, unblemished for Him." That's why they were excited.

**Dr. Reagan:** The thing that gets me that in every chapter of your book you have gems like that. That you have gotten a lot of them you've gotten from Jewish sources, from both Messianic Jews, and Orthodox Jews. And from beginning to end the book is just full of little gems like that that get you so excited. And I just can't recommend the book highly enough.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, when I saw all these things and how it was tying in, all pointing to Christ in everything I was flabbergasted.

**Dr. Reagan:** Let's get more excited. Let's come back in a moment and talk about how these relate to prophecy.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

### Part 3

**Nathan Jones:** Welcome back to Christ in Prophecy and our interview of Michael Norten regarding the Feasts of Israel. Well Michael you were telling us a little about the agriculture, a little about the history, this is the part we want to get into. Tell us about the prophetic meaning of these seven feasts. How they relate to Christianity and to the life of Jesus.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, what I discovered it was like God's playbill or playbook on what His plans are for the ages. And the first four feasts are the Spring feasts are at all the integral details of His First Coming.

**Nathan Jones:** First coming.

**Michael Norten:** The Fall feasts, the three Fall feasts are all about His Second Coming and in just as much in detail.

**Nathan Jones:** So that there is a big gap between the two mean something?

**Michael Norten:** Right, it means because the large separation between His First and His Second Coming. Now what is interesting in the Passover you have, we think of His of the justification, when He was sacrificed at Passover. And the Feast of Unleavened Bread we think of sanctification because our sins were buried with Christ. He was buried at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. And we are to live and walk in a sinless life to Him in our life style. And then we see in the First Fruits, He is resurrected in the First Fruits we think about glorification. And then Pentecost which is the feast at least in the Old Testament is when we get the Holy Spirit. Now what is interesting is in the Feast of Weeks they received the Law, okay and 3,000 men died. Well in the Pentecost when we got the Holy Spirit 3,000 men were saved. The Law brought death, the Spirit brought life.

**Dr. Reagan:** You are saying the Feast of Pentecost in Jewish viewpoint looks back to the giving of the Law at Sinai.

**Michael Norten:** Yes. And they had the same things happen at both feasts which is quite fascinating.

**Dr. Reagan:** So, the first four feasts you've got Passover pointing to prophecy of the death of the Messiah. The Unleavened Bread is a feast that points to the prophecy of the burial of the Messiah. And the First Fruits is the resurrection. In fact the First Fruits always lands on Sunday.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** Always on Sunday and that's when He was resurrected. And then you have a period of 50 days and you come to the Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost and that is the establishment of the Church and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the day.

**Michael Norten:** Right and Feast of Weeks established basically Israel because they got the Law.

**Dr. Reagan:** So you've got all those fulfilled in the Christian experience. And then you've got the five months which is sort of the Church Age I guess.

**Michael Norten:** Yeah now let me mention two quite briefly before we go into the Fall feasts.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yeah.

**Michael Norten:** That First Fruits is very interesting because when Mary Magdalene saw Jesus and wanted to give Him a hug. And He says, "You can't touch me yet I haven't been."

**Dr. Reagan:** That's a mysterious statement.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, and I thought, "Well how rude. She just wanted to give you a hug. Get over it." Well I found out I was looking in Josephus to find out his take on First Fruits because he was a contemporary Jewish historian. He said, "During the Feast of First Fruits we were not even allowed to touch the barley until the First Fruits had been presented to God at the Temple." He was the First Fruits; Jesus was the First Fruits of many brethren. And he said, "Tell all your brethren I'm going to the Father." So He apparently went to the Father, then came back and said, "Hey Thomas you can touch me now, you're kosher, and you're acceptable to God." The barley in the field became kosher, or acceptable to the Lord because of what the first fruits had done. We became acceptable to the Lord not for what we did but what our First Fruits did.

**Dr. Reagan:** Once again one of those wonderful gems that you have woven into the story all along.

**Michael Norten:** It's incredible, and looking at the Feast of Trumpets.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, now we are going to the Fall.

**Michael Norten:** The Fall feasts.

**Dr. Reagan:** We are going into September.

**Michael Norten:** We are going into getting insights on the Second Coming now.

**Dr. Reagan:** Ok, now these are the three feasts that you are going to talk about that have not been fulfilled in the Christian experience.

**Michael Norten:** Have not been fulfilled; and it's interesting because the Feast of Trumpets or Rosh Hashanah as they call, it came on the new moon. And they celebrated it two days; the reason they celebrate it for two days is because no one knew the hour or the day or the hour of the new moon. And they would watch and watch.

**Dr. Reagan:** Just like we don't know the day or hour of the Coming of the Lord.

**Michael Norten:** Exactly. And when they would determine the new moon had shown up, then they started blowing trumpets and their 100 different blasts. And I show in my book the significance of each one of those blasts. But the last blast was the Tekiah Gedolah it's a long blast and it very possibly is the last trump that Paul was referring to in 1 Thessalonians 4, he says, "We will be caught up at the last trump."

**Nathan Jones:** Last trumpet.

**Dr. Reagan:** So are you saying that most likely the Rapture will occur on the Feast of Trumpets?

**Michael Norten:** It's very possible because in the Spring feasts He fulfilled everything He did on the very day of the feasts.

**Dr. Reagan:** I know, I know.

**Nathan Jones:** Would we know the day and hour though then?

**Michael Norten:** No we don't, that's why we have to celebrate it for two days.

**Nathan Jones:** Excellent.

**Dr. Reagan:** And we don't know the year. But I tell you what I called Zola Levitt one time many years ago, back in the 80's and I said, "Zola do you believe that the Rapture is most likely to occur on the Feast of Trumpets?" And he said, "Well of course what's the matter with you?" He said, "Every year I get my calendar the first thing I do is I look for the Feast of Trumpets." And he said, "I put a big red circle around it." And he said, "The closer we get to it the harder I pray."

**Michael Norten:** That's exactly what I do. Well also what is interesting between the last day of the Rosh Hashanah the Feast of Trumpets, and Yom Kippur.

**Dr. Reagan:** How many days are we talking?

**Michael Norten:** Seven days.

**Dr. Reagan:** Seven days.

**Michael Norten:** Between them, ok. Well the Priests and the High Priests would go into hiding because they didn't want to be defiled. We as a Kingdom of Priests will be with our High Priest for seven years after the Rapture with our High Priest. And then at the end of seven years while the Tribulation is finishing its work Christ will come back and we will come with Him; we will be dressed in white. Hope you guys look good in white, ok. And the Jews will look up and recognize Jesus as the one who they had pierced, according to Zechariah 12. And all of Israel at that point will be saved. Their sins will be covered like in the Old Testament.

**Dr. Reagan:** So the fulfillment of Yom Kippur will be the Second Coming and the salvation of the Jewish remnant.

**Michael Norten:** Yes and the Jews traditionally expect the Messiah to show up at Yom Kippur.

**Dr. Reagan:** How about that?

**Michael Norten:** And then we have later the Feast of Tabernacles.

**Nathan Jones:** Oh, the celebration.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, the celebration. And we will be celebrating Christ tabernacling or dwelling with us in His Kingdom, His Millennial Kingdom. But here's what's also quite fascinating. There is an addendum to that feast. It's a seven day feast but it has eight days. That last day, the eighth day, you know eight is symbolic or reminding the Jews of new beginning, it means new beginning. They call it the Feast of Eighth Day; it's the addendum to the Feast of Tabernacles. And when they are packing up in their Sukkot, and their hut and everything ready to go, he says, "Hold on, we have one more celebration, that's the Feast of the Eighth Day." And they're to look forward to our eternity with the Lord in the new heavens, and the new earth.

**Dr. Reagan:** Wow.

**Michael Norten:** All these feasts point to Christ.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes, even the Jews recognize the Feast of Tabernacles as being prophetic in the sense that it means the Messiah is going to come and tabernacle with us.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** Now something else you point out about the Feast of Tabernacles and that is you think that Jesus was born during that time.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, that quite, quite interesting because Luke let the cat out the bag when he said Zacharias when the angel visited him they said that he was of the order of Abia which is in 1 Chronicles 24:10, and in the Talmud I discovered they are on the eighth week at the Temple.

**Dr. Reagan:** So the priests are divided into groups.

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And we know exactly in what order.

**Michael Norten:** In 24 groups.

**Nathan Jones:** Like 24 elders around the throne?

**Michael Norten:** Yes.

**Dr. Reagan:** And we knew in what order they ministered at the Temple.

**Michael Norten:** Yes, and so we know in the Hebraic calendar when he was there. And so assuming that he went home and Elizabeth became pregnant with John the Baptist at that point.

We count the weeks and we have found that John the Baptist had to be born at Passover. Of course Jesus called him the Elijah of that day. And they always looked at Elijah as coming at the Passover.

**Dr. Reagan:** And Jesus was conceived six months later?

**Michael Norten:** Six months later in the Hebraic calendar we find out that He was born at the Feast of Tabernacles which is in October.

**Dr. Reagan:** Yes.

**Michael Norten:** The shepherds would not have been in the field in December I guarantee you, it was October. And then you count backwards and you find out that He was conceived at Hanukah. Hanukah is the Festival of Lights and Tabernacles is the show of lights. And He says, "I am the light of the world." What a couple of bookends is that?

**Dr. Reagan:** Well folks what you are seeing here just nugget, after nugget after nugget of wonderful insights that are contained in Michael's book. And I want to encourage you to get a copy of it. I am sure you can find it easily on the internet. The title once again is, *Unlocking the Secrets of the Feasts*. Thanks for being with us.

**Michael Norten:** Thank you.

**Nathan Jones:** Well folks that's our program for this week. And I hope it has been a blessing to you. Until next week the Lord willing this is Nathan Jones and Dr. David Reagan saying, "Look up, be watchful, for our redemption is drawing near."

**End of Program**