**PARTICIPANT 7**

**Research Questions:**

1. **How would you describe your personal and chosen approach to scripture?**

*Contextual. (Context of the scripture and context for the reader) If you take every book of the Bible and know where it comes from, who was the audience, what was the circumstances and where does the book fit in and see what the message was for that time? Then when you get the message that was written by the author to his audience, then you can get transfer it and take it over to your own audience or your own congregation.*

1. **What has led you to adopt this approach to scripture?**
2. **What one word best describes your approach to scripture besides the answer in Question 1?**
3. **What principle(s) would you consider as important to all biblical interpretation?**

*Context for the scripture and context for the reader again*

1. **For example, how would you understand Zechariah 14 from the Old Testament?**

*Zechariah was a post exilic prophet and he came at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah and he was with Haggai. This was his context in the time when they were rebuilding the temple. So they struggled to rebuild the temple. Then he got the visions to help the people understand. Then the second part of Zechariah (Chapter 14) comes in and he gives them the visions to tell them that the Lord is in command, you don’t have to worry about the trials and tribulations that you are going through now, the Lord is in command. So I won’t take the section about the rotting of the flesh, as it were, as literal. I will take that the Lord standing on the Mountain as God being in command. It is not that the nations will come to Jerusalem. So now it seems as if God is not in command and we are struggling but the Lord is still in command and he will reign with power over his people.*

*Zechariah is encouraging the people who are rebuilding Jerusalem and the temple and they go through discouragement and Zechariah says the Lord is there and he will help.*

1. **For example, how would you understand Romans 11 in particular V26-27 from the New Testament?**

*Paul is writing to the Jewish people and he was a Jew himself and Peter was a Jew and most early believers were Jews. After a while when they went on their missions trips many heathen and non- Jewish people started to believe and they become the majority. Still there were Jews that Paul had to speak to. The Jews were special people but then came Christ and changed the situation a little bit and now the church is more important. As part of the church there are Jewish people. In a certain sense these Jewish people are still in a certain sense, the people of God. It seems to me that there is a parallel that is going on. So the church of non-Jewish people is the church of Christ but in them is also Jewish people. So they not separate but now they have become a part of the church. But still it seems to me that Paul emphasised that the Jewish people that believe in Jesus, not the OT Jews. God judged the OT people for their beliefs and for their traditions. In the New Testament, there is a new dispensation. So now those old people they will be ok with God. But now the Jews in the NT times must make a choice for Jesus and not for sacrifices etc. The important thing then is then the engrafting. The mother plant in there but the heathen are engrafted in. The Jewish people have come through from the OT to the NT but now they have to make a decision for Jesus.*

*I don’t think it is all the physical descendants of Israel because then there is no place for Jesus. So only the Jews who believe in Jesus will be saved. All who believe in Jesus will be saved.*

*The covenant changed from the circumcision to the baptism. Therefore, the covenant stopped. The Jews must be part of the old covenant any more. Now, they (the Jews) must be part of the new covenant, the baptism in Jesus. Personally, I don’t think God has a future for Israel. They don’t believe and I don’t think the grace of God is so big. He will help the Jews because of David: “You ate the sower grapes and your teeth will be on edge.” This was said to Jewish people.*

1. **What do you understand or know about how the Church, at various times, interpreted scripture?**

*I think that God is so big. It is like giving your small child your car keys. God’s relationship with Abram is not like his relationship with us, there is a long evolution that took place. We changed a lot of knowledge, theology and scientific knowledge. I don’t think God works with us as modern people the same as Abram. Even in the 19th Century, people did not read as much as a newspaper of today in their whole lifetime. Yet again, Abraham was illiterate, who was the father of the faithful, God had a different relationship with him. Even with theologians, God looks differently at us because we have a lot of different experiences and knowledge where others don’t have. It’s not a different God but a different relationship. It’s like how a relationship grows between and father and son.*

1. **Have you been exposed to dispensationalism and what are your thoughts of it?**

*I have known about it but in the past few days I have read a lot about it.*

1. **Are you familiar with one John Nelson Darby and what is your evaluation of him?**

*He was like the Father of dispensationalism. He put it on the map.*

1. **What do you know about the history of dispensationalism before JN Darby?**

*There were people in the 17th Century that stains of dispensationalism as well as the Plymouth Brethren. They sat down and they discussed this stuff and they worked it out and they differ from each other with regards to the new covenant, the pre millennialism and so forth. There were people before Darby that had ideas about dispensationalism but Darby coined it.*

1. **If you were made aware of the history of dispensationalism, would you be willing to discuss and give your personal perspectives on the following claims of dispensationalism:**

Yes.

* ***God has always had varied and distinct arrangements (called dispensations) with humanity throughout History.***

*I would agree that there are dispensations. However, it has to do with where it is all going. God wants his people to be his children, thus God spoke to Abram in his context. In the middle ages with no knowledge and then afterwards the enlightenment with the printing of books, then comes a new ear. God wanted these people in their different contexts to be my children, so I work with them according to how they understand.*

* ***Israel, as a nation and the Church, as a whole, have two distinct origins, missions and destinies.***

*I come from a covenant background and N.T Wright and Ferdinand Deist who published lots of books. Deist said the context was very important.*

* ***There is a future, physical removal of the church (called the rapture) prior to the coming wrath of God on the Earth (called the tribulation).***

*It does not really matter ultimately if there is a rapture or not, we must be right with God that is important. The different opinions should not separate us. As long as one does his research. As a covenant theologian I know about the rapture, but he won’t preach about it because for me it is not so important. NT Wright says that the Parousia is a picture of Caesar coming to a town as a sign of respect. When an Emperor comes to a city, the people of the city will go out to meet him as a sign of respect and then they will come back with him. For us, the Lord is greater that Caesar and he is the Lord and we must respect him. The Lord is here in our city and he is living among us and we must live as citizens.*

* ***There is a coming literal 1000 Year kingdom reign of Jesus Christ on Earth (called the millennium) fulfilling God’s covenant promises to Abraham and his descendants.***

*I don’t agree that there is a 1000 Year Millennial Reign. We studied Revelation in University. That is the new Jerusalem, yet again the new Jerusalem is when we go into the kingdom of God which is here and there (the already and not yet). The Millennium is from Pentecost until the final coming of Christ. Ten is the complete times table that only God knows about. So the millennium is not necessarily a thousand years. It is about the present, not waiting for the second coming and being afraid for the rapture and who will be left behind. The grace is there for us to say God is with us and we must do the work we have to do, let his kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven now, not one day. I am not a futurist, I am realist. Now we must expand the Kingdom with all our tribulations. This is the challenge with the church. The church stood up against apartheid, the church must stand up against corruption and stand up for Justice, especially the Dutch Reformed Church. We must proclaim the Kingdom of God here and now just like Abraham did when he built his little altars here and there. He planted the flags saying, God is here, God is here, God is here. Not only geographically, but everywhere we go we must proclaim it. Like in Zechariah, everything is sacred. We live in a sacred world and we must proclaim it and live to the glory of God.*

* ***The ultimate purpose of all creation and history, is the eternal Glory of God in His Kingdom.***

*The ultimate purpose is to make everyone God’s Children.*

1. **Are there any questions or concerns you have with the dispensational approach to scripture?**