**PARTICIPANT #2**

**Research Questions:**

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

*As a Reverend, as I read the Bible for myself is it God’s breath BUT in the pages of Scripture but the books of the Bible have been written over a long period of time and by various people (Like the Israelites and the Jewish Rabbis) from various types people groups. For me the Bible has come over a long period of time and various parts have been added to it. It is about these people’s experience with God. It is not only about people’s stories, it is also God’s breathe. We cannot forget one above the other as there are these two aspects. The writers of the Bible did not just write the Bible and that was all but these people reasoned about the Bible and this is why there are so many differences in the Bible and this was not a problem for them because it was a collective communication and a collection of stories and experiences. Thus the Bible is not an historical document that tells me exactly what happened in the past. It is not a book of science handbook that tells us how science works. It is a book about people who tell us about their experiences with God but it is also God’s breath. This is why this book is important for me today because it is God who speaks to me through it. This is a strange thing.*

1. **What has led you to adopt this approach to scripture?**

*This approach to the scripture makes the most sense to me as I am someone who likes stories. These are the stories that these people told about God, I am part of these stories. For me the world is about people’s stories so this works for me.*

1. **What one word best describes your approach to scripture besides the answer in Question 1?**

*(Have not had time to think about one word to give an answer)*

1. **What principle(s) would you consider as important to all biblical interpretation?**

*We need to understand the context in which the Bible was written and where it has come from and for whom was it written. If one considers the context the message of the Bible begins to get richer. The purpose of the writing makes the Bible makes sense. On the other hand we also have a personal context. These two contexts need to speak to each other. If I look at the context then I feel that I am a part of the experiences of the people who have written the Bible.*

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

*Understand that this is my personal understanding that these experiences of these people and what is written in the Bible, between these things, and what is to take place one day, I speak of the now and the not yet and prophecy is personal. It is about what took place then (the exile and looking back and forward at the exile). The prophets not only spoke about what happened one day in the past, but they are also speaking about what is happening today and what is going to happen. Much of these things happened at that time in the exile and after the exile these things were fulfilled. However, the Bible also speaks about what is happening today but it also speaks about what is still going to happen. I read about something that happened and I can see how the Lord has fulfilled it but he will one day also fulfil it for the whole world. The things that have been fulfilled were for the Israelites but things there are things that were not only for their situation but also for the future. For Zechariah 14, the whole creation will serve the Lord and he will be God and everyone will see him. There will not be a literal touching of the Lord’s feet on the Mount of Olives. There is a lot of symbolic language in the Bible and when it says that the feet of the Lord will touch the Mount of Olives it just means that the Lord is not far from us. He is present with us. When the authors of the Bible wrote they used very rich symbolic language about how people spoke about God because they could not describe with words so they used symbols. For example when it says that: “his train filled the temple” that the Holy God is here, he filled the temple and fills everything. Therefore, I can see how this is realized. History repeats itself and shortly it will be realized again and again so that one day I won’t see his feet, I will experience his presence.*

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

*Paul did not know: “What about Israel?” and Israel was a problem for him and he says at the end: “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom…” So I believe what Paul actually wanted to say: “That God’s grace is great.” Jesus brought God’s grace to all nations to bring the covenant to all nations is the new Israel. However, the Jews specifically, Paul says, when you read everything: “I don’t know, I know God’s grace is huge” but in the end we read: “O the depth of the riches both of wisdom…”*

*The Israel that Paul is referring to in Romans 11:26 are the believers, the believers, the people, the new Israel of the new covenant that Jesus came and gave a new covenant and that is the whole, all the believers. These Israelites the Jews, I don’t know where they fit in. As I say God has his own ways, I don’t know, I really don’t know.*

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

*I think from the beginning the early church where they gathered in the catacombs, I think they said that things are specifically so and so. That was not modern times. People were simple and they were not open to different interpretations. In modern times, I think the church has become more open to different interpretations. I think in the middle-ages it was more about the (resistance) reformation rather than trying to interpret the Bible. There were some though who were free in interpretation. Then came modernism and then the people began to see the Bible as a handbook of science and that’s when you are only able to interpret the Bible one way. I think that when one interprets the Bible in one way, it makes the Bible poorer.*

1. **Have you been exposed to dispensationalism and what are your thoughts of it?**
2. **Are you familiar with one John Nelson Darby and what is your evaluation of him?**

*Just heard about him.*

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

*Those who held to dispensational ideas before Darby but he developed it. Those who absolutize the traditions of dispensationalism then it bring about injustice like what the Jews are doing to the Palestinians and God is not a God of injustice.*

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.***

*God did have different ways that he dealt with people at different times.*

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

*The church goes back to Abraham because Jesus came and he spoke of the new covenant and brought in the new covenant. I think what Jesus is doing with the new covenant is that he is making everyone that believes apart of the God’s History with people. This is why our origins are not that different. Jesus came and made the church one. Perhaps the Jews will say they are distinct but I don’t think we are separate. The Jews were more exclusive but the church has to be more inclusive but if you go back to God promise to Abraham, he said to Abraham: “Go be a blessing to all the Nations” and with that God gave Abraham a mission.*

* ***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).***

*No I don’t believe this. If one goes back to the context, these people went through such tribulation and they struggled and I think for them they saw that as their time of struggling now and they will be relived from that. That is for everybody, we all go through struggle and we all will be with God but I don’t think there is this Rapture and 1000 Year. If you study it and you look at all the symbols that he is using, the use of language and the apocalyptic way of talking and writing, then you will know that it is more a way of describing people’s situation and God’s redemption more than taking literally and saying it’s going to happen.*

* ***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.***

*There is a physical return of Christ at his second coming and he will then form a new heaven and a new earth and everyone that is on the earth that has gone through so much struggles, he will bring everyone together and everyone will live in him and with him. The new heaven and new earth is not symbolic it is just that we don’t know how it will be. I cannot describe the new heaven and new earth. I think that is why symbolic language is used because it goes above what people can understand therefore symbolism is used to describe something about the glory of God but that something, I cannot tell you how the new heaven and the new earth will look.*

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

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