**PARTICIPANT 11**

**Research Questions:**

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

*I’m very strongly a Kingdom person which means that I totally accept and totally believe that this world is not about our own Kingdoms and not about our own power struggles and our own need for becoming important people and sitting around with big money and all that type of stuff but fully realizing this world is about someone greater than us. So it is about a Kingdom person which means that it my personal life and through choice I truly believe, and though I have respect for people with other religions, I totally identify with the Christian faith and in contrast with what is happening with what is happening in the Dutch Reformed Churches that you get, assort of maybe in some sense, super conservatives and on the other hand, super liberals, I am both as a person but also as a Church Historian, not a fence sitting person but a mainstream person, main road person. It is a matter of faith and knowledge working together (Faith is belief is a certain knowledge and a sure confidence) I cannot explain every little detail of the wonders and the aspects of the Christian gospel, I am just far too small and far too stupid, with my little brain, to understand the greatness of our Lord. (Faith is belief is a certain knowledge and a sure confidence). This is my choice and over the time that I spent at the Faculty of Theology in Pretoria, I took a stand not for either conservatism or for liberalism. I can say that I am concerned about the future of the NGK because I believe that the NGK has been hijacked by liberal forces in many different ways. So it is both my choice and ultimately my challenge that I at this stage of my life feel very strongly about.*

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

*It is the grace of the Lord and secondly my upbringing in a fairly balanced sort of context. My family, their exposure and my experience of going to church with my parents, though as a young kid I did not understand all the dimensions, but also then the influence of both the teachers at school level but also teachers and leaders within the church context; with whom I identified strongly and so forth. So it is a matter of so many influences that played a role and eventually it was me balanced view on these issues, I identified with people like Ben Marais and then also people like Johan Heins, Willy Jonker. But then I have friends across the board, Gerald Pillay, the general secretary of the world council of churches. So I know so many people across the board. What strikes me is that these people are very well balanced people and committed to the basics and in my opinion, though as a reformed person, I do respect and accept the three documents of faith (Heidelberg, Belgic and Dort) I very strongly identify with the apostolic twelve articles which I think is the essence of Christian faith and is shared across the Christian faith regardless of race or colour. I am also in that respect an open persona and all along though I was an activist in the old South Africa, I was a great reformist and I tried to reform to bring about change. I did meet with Beyers Naude’. In 1948, Ben Marias said that we cannot build Apartheid on the scriptures. He was not only my teacher but he was also a colleague of mine. Eventually I took over his position because he was also a church historian. So that is a bit of my history.*

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

*When it comes to liberalism over and against responsible thinking about scriptures, it is essentially a matter of a well-balanced hermeneutic. I feel strongly about so called grammatical historical way of understanding scriptures. That means that I do find it important that we try to understand both the authors language and origins which means that all of the historical, although I accept responsible historical criticism, I do not accept radical and or liberal historical criticism where ones comes not with a responsible approach to scriptures but you come with an agenda and presupposition. I do not see myself as a conservative but rather a “responsiblelist” I am certainly not a liberal.*

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

*The authority of scripture. Is the Bible men’s and woman’s thoughts on the word of God, on the one hand, a humanistic approach, with nice stories about this nice God and this nice Jesus; over against, though it was written by human beings, by organic inspiration not mechanical inspiration, it is not man’s word about God but rather God’s word to man. I believe that the Bible on my shelf is not the same as the other books on my shelf. It is a matter of authority and it is the Word of God. I once studied in Holland for my Doctorate and I once listened to a man preach who said that it is grace, covenantal in that reformed context. Over and against other religions because it is grace we must spread this Gospel without judgement of others but have this deep rooted conviction. Can I also add that in this complex and hopeless world, this macro world of north, east, west and south, in all this world with all its wars and problems, if we do not have an anchor, we are totally lost and if we do not have an anchor of faith, then we are even more lost. Though it is tough to be a believer who has opposition from many different quarters we must push ahead in these difficult times and be spreaders of love, hope and faith and this is the only way to go.*

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

*The whole message of the entire Bible is about sin, salvation and living a life of gratitude. Essentially, within those facets of dispensations, my view is that it is not a chronological process, there are elements of chronology or periods within dispensationalism, though it is not chronological. The message is that we are sinners and there is essentially one dispensation. The second idea is that of how we receive grace, not through my efforts but through the grace of God and what do I do eventually about grace? We live a life of gratitude.*

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

*This passage focuses on judgment. Then the specific role of Israel and there my position, though the position of Israel is mentioned in Zechariah 14 and Romans 11, think one has to differentiate between Israel in current terms and Israel as a Nation and Israel as a Messianic, accepting of the Messiah and Lord and Saviour of this world. In many different ways. In the mind of many theologians, Israel has been given a special position but I think they confuse the nationhood of Israel with their Messianic acceptance of Israel. Therefore, I believe, and I say that with great respect towards the Israeli people, but they have accepted half of the Bible, The Old Testament and not the reality of grace through Jesus Christ. Though it may be sharp, but one has to differentiate between the two. When it comes to judgement and it’s a reality, there will be judgement. When it comes to the 12 Articles, if I refer to the Afrikaans again: “Where He will judge between the quick and the dead”. Therefore, it is not a matter of enjoy life and carry on, we will be judged as well.*

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

*Throughout church history there were many different views on the Bible and though I am not going to refer to the early church but the Reformation. Resistance to the Reformation was essentially to truly understand how do I find how do I find a just God? Martin Luther. The purposes of the Bible was lost in the later stages of Roman Catholicism.*

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

*Then the so called millennial thinking is a matter of; it’s either a dispensation that will still come or it’s a dispensation from Jesus Christ onwards. That is the big issue when it comes to Millennialism, Pre Millennialism and Post Millennialism.*

1. **Are you familiar with one John Nelson Darby and what is your evaluation of him?**
2. **What do you know about the history of dispensationalism before JN Darby?**

*What’s interesting, and though I am not a specialist on Darby, he came from the Irish Background and was an Anglican. He was not always happy with the Anglican influence and eventually moved to Europe and was exposed to other influences, had some talks on judgement, Millennialism and the Thousand Years. Essentially, if I understand Darby in my lack of knowledge about him, in the final analysis, he constantly placed a huge emphasis on the glory of God. He did not want to come with a new theology as such, or he did not want to throw the apple cart around, but eventually he felt strongly because my understanding was that he was a very committed person and that he was having the glory of God as the essence of his life.*

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:**

*When we come back to my strong opinion of the basics and the secondary things. There are basic issues in Theology and in the Bible but there are secondary issues as well and to differentiate between that. Then when it comes to the 19th Century, it was a matter of Bultman and his followers who degraded the Christian Gospel and many elements of it to myths and fairy tales. It is far too big for me, or any of these big guys, to understand the God of this universe and therefore, it is a matter of them playing a very popular game in 19th Century Theology and currently in liberalism, it’s a fashion to be and adult about everything and to be listing every reality. These people are at a loss because they are not understanding the essence or the basics. Some of them try to retain the basics but they are mostly on a sliding slope. So it is matter of returning then back to understanding the scriptures in the course of history. I think the enlightenment was a very important issue that led to the degradation and the degrading of scriptures. Once again we are experiencing the same thing that happened in the 19th Century. We are expiring again the issue of faith vs knowledge. We think we can explain everything. We cannot because we are far too stupid.*

* ***God has always had varied and distinct arrangements (called dispensations) with humanity throughout History.***
* ***Israel, as a nation and the Church, as a whole, have two distinct origins, missions and destinies.***
* ***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).***
* ***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.***
* ***The ultimate purpose of all creation and history, is the eternal Glory of God in His Kingdom.***

*If we can seek the glory of God despite our differences and diversity the big challenge will be not to allow diversity to create division. This is the story of South African politics before 1990. Diversity should not become.*

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

*In dispensationalism and reformed or covenant theology, and as I said, I try to get perspectives from other people. In discussion we can try to meet one another but the big thing is in all of this and in this phase of world history and to realize that though there is diversity not allowing diversity to become a weapon but on the other hand not being naïve about the realities of diversity but also trying to pave the way for the coming of the Lord. Whether we are in the 1000 years or if he is coming for a 1000 years. This is not of the utmost importance as it is a secondary issue.*

*What does dispensationalism say today and what does dispensationalism say to this world?*