**PARTICIPANT 3**

**Research Questions:**

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

*The scripture is normative. It is the inspired word of God. I understand that it was not dropped from heaven in one day. To work with the scripture is to do some work to get what is going on. The Holy Spirit must also enlighten me and that he must do it in various ways. The Bible is completed as a cannon. In other words, The Bible is given to me and it is complete as we cannot add to the scriptures. In the process of understanding the Bible that I need to be enlightened to understand it in the times that I live.*

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

*I think different things because it ones entire history. It’s not one thing. I had the privilege of growing up in a home where everyone served the Lord and my parents served the Lord. My father and mother were involved in the church and in the way that they conducted service to God at home and everything in prayer meetings. My involvement at school in the student Christian Foundation and my desire to know and to understand who God was through God’s Holy Spirt in my life. At University I studied Theology and the responsible people that I studied under that helped me and also helped me never to lose the wonder of the Bible text.*

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

*Perhaps Responsible text interpretation with wonder for the text*

1. **What principle(s) would you consider as important to all biblical interpretation?**
2. **For example, how would you understand Zechariah 14 from the Old Testament?**

*I can only think how I have been taught. The inspiration of the Bible was not a mechanical thing that just happened. It took time. In my understanding, it is a post exilic prophet that spoke of the inspiring the people to rebuild the temple but there also is an eschatological section to the book from chapter 9 onwards and especially from chapter 12 to 14. Then I understand this temple that was supposed to be built and the work the Zerubbabel should have done and everyone else that the glory that was there and that Haggai told about would take place if the temple was rebuilt and what motivated them to rebuild it. This glory was never really was fulfilled in the nation. There is always an opening in every prophecy that looks to the future. This is a section of eschatology that ultimately that would not be fulfilled through a temple but through God would be fulfilled. A future where He would be the everything where he would be in control and be the end result that he would make where he is in control and where the holy war and everything that happened to the people and their land where he takes control of it all in this process to give them a blessed future where he is in the centre. In these images of the olive tree that is where he prayed, sweated blood and suffered where everything for humanity was born, a future where he is present with them.*

*The issue of the literal interpretation is not something that I would use to understand this passage in Zechariah 14. The message is about hope for the people at that time. It’s a message also for the future that God would be there for the people and in his wonders he will bring about a completion of all things.*

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

*To understand the passage we must start with the olive tree and the olive branches that were broken off when the Pharisees and all the people… (The olive tree is the completed people of God who are saved that would include Israel and the Gentiles who believe) Israel would be the people of God. Ultimately the question is: “What about Israel that has rejected Christ, have they been cast away?” Initially, Israel was the chosen people but because of their unbelief and the way they behaved, God has brought in others (the church) to make Israel jealous so that they ultimately would believe. The completion of this is what God wants for the Jews and that is that they would also come to believe. God is using the Gentiles to get them to believe and we must not be high minded against the Jews. It is important that these people are bought into the fold of the people of God. It is not about two people that will be saved but rather the completion of those who are saved: The 144 000 of Revelation. There is also glory for the Jews who will be saved. The fullness of the Gentiles spoken of in the verse before would be the task of the church to bring Gentiles out of heathenism and bring everyone to salvation. Israel is ultimately the means through which the revelation of Christ would come and so Israel comes from the Covenant but it comes down to the commission in Matthew 28 where we are told to go to all the nations and make disciples if all nations. The covenant overflows to all: “In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed” In the end it is about one, one tree that everyone comes to be part of the tree.*

*What Paul is saying in Romans 11 is that you have received grace because you have believed. That the Lord has not forgotten Israel and who is saved are those who have believed. The faith that came out of Israel has spread to others and that it will also in the last days that we live in there will be a special new focus on them and that they will become a part of the olive tree.*

*God has a plan for the entire world and the covenant that God has with Israel is an everlasting covenant with Israel and we are made apart of that covenant when God says to Abram: “Through you will all the nations of the earth be blessed”. The covenant that is written on people’s hearts brings us into this everlasting covenant. Even though the Lord has moved away from Israel, he has not forgotten them and where they have come from. I can understand how people feel that if God has kept the Jews and formed them into a nation then it helps others believe how the promises of God are true. I don’t think that that the Lord ultimately wants to have two groups of people, but one. The covenant that is being referred to in this passage is the covenant in Jesus because Jesus is the fulfilment of the covenant. This covenant has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ when he takes our sin away.*

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

*Perhaps some people understand everything in the Bible literally. Then there were people who spiritualized everything in the Bible and there were those who saw everything in the Bible Christologically. There have been those who saw the Bible through prophecy and fulfilment.*

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

*Calvin wrote and Professor Hermie van Zyl wrote about dispensationalism. What I understand about dispensationalism is two things that are the literal interpretation of the text and the salvation of Israel as a nation. They teach first a rapture and then a seven year tribulation and then the return of the Lord with those that have been raptured to earth and then a 1000 Year Kingdom. Then there is a short time when the devil is released and then the new heaven and new Earth.*

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

*I was not aware of John Nelson Darby but I did some research about him for this interview. He was a real person who had said that the church was on the wrong track and he wanted to the church to get back on track.*

1. **What do you know about the history of dispensationalism before JN Darby?**
2. **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.***
* *What the dispensationalist do is have a first, second and third coming of Christ and they marry various passages together. When Revelation is about the presence of the Lord with his church to give hope to his people, the dispensationalists take I Thess. 4 and marry that into the book of Revelation. So the text is not really about an actual 1000 Years but it about courage and motivation for the church and the language is apocalyptic. The second coming is a literal event but to place these dispensations into the text literally is a difficult thing. When we speak about the miracles of Christ, then this speaks of a time when everyone will be healed. Christ did not heal everyone but only some. So he will heal everyone one day when he wipes away all tears and there will be no more sickness or death for God will be with them and they will be his people. This is the covenant that will come to completion.*
* ***Israel, as a nation and the Church, as a whole, have two distinct origins, missions and destinies.***

*Remember from the beginning God makes people and people fall. In the end God then makes a new group of people from Abram. God makes a promise to Abram to bless the nations through him. God then makes a covenant with these people. This is the origin from whence it comes and this is the goal. God would bring his law so that the nations could live according to it. Others come and associate as proselytes and everyone becomes a part of the nation of Israel. In the old end they cannot live in it completely as they should have, there is then a prophecy about a Messiah that would come and the glory would not be completely broken. Jesus came as fulfilment of these Messianic covenant and the way the people did not understand it. The origin of this comes from the heart of God and the election of God, because I cannot separate the election from this, because God from eternity past elected people. Then comes the growth and that which comes in Matthew 1 how he moves into the Covenant and Luke we see the genealogy how he moves back into humanity. In other words we see God’s thoughts about people, if we look at it we still see how he wants to give his grace to the world and this comes to those who see Jesus Christ as Lord who was in eternity past. So there is a continuity of God’s eternal plan but also a discontinuity of his plan. There is a new era that is actually coming in Christ and that we as a human race can be a part of. We are living in the dispensation of the church and the Holy Spirit because in Jesus Christ this became a reality. The Holy Spirit has only one aim and that is make Jesus Christ a reality in people’s lives so that God kingdom can be built because ultimately it is about the Kingdom of God.*

* ***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)***

*I think it needs to understand it in a different way. Paul had a problem that he was dealing with: A suffering Church because of people that have died not having seen the return of the Lord. This is also the problem in the book of Hebrews. Hebrew’s author tells his readers not to give up because if they do then how can you be forgiven if forgiveness is only found in Christ. There is a great cloud of witnesses around you and you must not give up but keep your eyes on Jesus. So James stops the people from behaving as others do. You have to endure and preserver in your faith because your faith must produce fruit. So this an incredible motivation in I and II Corinthians 4 about the treasure and having the treasure in us, in clay pots and where he motivates people not to give up telling us that we are in the hands of God that rescue and grace will come for people and that we are in God’s hands. So to think of a physical removal in a moment, is not how I understand it.t*

*God is able to do whatever he wants but If I look at the Bible in its totality and read it systematically and put things together then it is about the day of the Lord that will come and no one ones the day or the hour not even the son of man. He will come on the clouds and every eye will see him. Eventually, people will be separated as Matthew 25 says: Like the sheep and the goats. Those people who don’t believe are judged in the second death but for those who believe there is only hope because Jesus in John 11 says: “I am the resurrection and the life, ye who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live.” My hope is not it a rapture or a removal, my hope is in the fact that I am in Christ, I live in Christ if I die, I die in Christ. God is with his church and active in the church and sees everything, he speaks to his church, he is not on the cross. When I live in the already but not yet under the influence of the holy spirit that I have the adoption of sons, the earnest, and I now have a life like I am in heaven. It is like I am already living in eternity because if I die then all has been accomplished for me because my name is in the lamb’s book of life.*

* ***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.***

*For me we are living in the last millennium. Since Christ there has been 2000 years. We live in the time where the Kingdom of God has to be a reality. We live in the dispensation of the church where the church, the kingdom when the end will come when everyone has heard. Many of the signs of the anti-Christ is already there and this is the evidence of what times are to come but what is the sign, when all the nations have heard. Johan Heins said that “ultimately it all about the Kingdom.” The door of the Kingdom Jesus. The way to get into the Kingdom is through Jesus. The church is not the Kingdom but the means to take the gospel into the world and to live the gospel so that people can be saved.*

* ***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?**

*I say my problem with things are; In Job, God had a problem with Job’s friends because they placed God in a box and if I put God in a box. Because Job was suffering, Job appeals to God against God as his advocate and when I put God in a box then I restrict God. Proverbs also says that you cannot put God in a box because he is wild. My problem with dispensationalism is that they are putting God and his will and his future into a box.*