

REFORMED CHURCH BELLVILLE: SUNDAY 2 MAY 2010: MORNING SERVICE

Sing before: Psalm 119:33.

Let us commence this meeting with God by declaring openly to one another and to God:

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth. Beloved grace and peace be to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, through the mighty working of God the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Psalm of praise: Psalm 34:6

Confession of faith: Apostolic

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, the third day He rose again from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy universal Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting

Amen.

After the reading of the Law we confess our guilt and pray for forgiveness and a new life before God with Psalm 25:4.

Law

Psalm: 25:4

Prayer:

- **Doxology**
- **Worship**
- **Confession of sins**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Gratitude**
- **Prayer for the need of the congregation for the church, the authorities and the sinful world and appeal to God's promises.**
- **General prayer**
- **Enlightenment from the Holy Spirit for the sake of the ministry of the Word.**

Amen

Psalm 86:6

Scripture reading: MICAH 3.

Text: MICAH 3: 5-7:

This what the LORD says:

“As for the prophets who lead my people astray, if one feeds them, they proclaim ‘peace’; if he does not, they prepare to wage war against him. Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them. The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.”

In recent times much attention is being paid to predictions made by seers, soothsayers and diviners. It is therefore appropriate that we examine Scripture about this matter.

- We must establish whether seers can really tell the truth and how we must distinguish between the reliable ones and the false ones.
- In Micah 3 the same issues that we encounter nowadays are discussed.

The prophet addresses the people of his time who are led by false spirits.

- He addresses them as leaders and rulers and then he speaks to the prophets and the priests.
- This is important for in this way the prophet relates all predicting to the office the person holds.

Compare this to verses 8 and 11 where he ties predicting to the office of prophet.

The first principle is thus quite clear:

- Only a person who holds an office in the kingdom of God can be a seer, or prophet, or diviner one may listen to.

Let us test this statement with reference to the rest of the Bible and examples the Lord gives there.

Take 1 Samuel 9:18-19 as an example:

- Saul is to be anointed king of Israel
- The Lord tells Samuel that Saul is the man He wants to rule His people.
- Saul asks Samuel: “Would you please tell me where the seer’s house is?” Whereupon Samuel replies: “I am the seer.”

Samuel is an office bearer. Here the office is related directly to that of being a seer.

Another example – 2 Samuel 15:27:

The king also said to Zadok, the priest, “are you not a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your son Ahimaaz and Jonathan son of Abiathar You and Abiathar, take your two sons with you.

Just as in the previous passage, the gift of being a seer is one of the gifts of office that God bestows on His office bearers. We read of this also in 2 Kings 17:13 where the Lord warns His people through all prophets and seers to turn away from their sins and to return to observing His decrees and commands as given to their fathers:

The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets and seers: “Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your fathers to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets.”

What is important about this text and the previous is that all the seers act only within the context of the church.

- Israel is the church of the Old Testament.
- Through the seers the LORD gives them His commands explicitly.
- They must keep the Law in a particular way.

The Bible has another example of the office being related to being a seer. Amos 7:12: King Amaziah chases Amos away and calls him a seer.

Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there."

Back to our text. The prophet Micah says that a true seer has the following attribute:

- His behaviour must be in accordance with service to God and His kingdom.
- It is written in verse 5 that they used their spiritual gifts for personal gain.
- For people who paid them they predicted good things but for the people who pointed out their falseness they predicted trouble.

There are seers among the people of Israel who deceive the Lord's people with false prophecies – prophecies not coming from God.

- It is about people who prophesy for gain.
- Prophets who see things and reveal it to people in order to achieve fame.

Their prophecies were not about the glory of God or the chosen people.

- That is the hallmark of the true seer according to the Bible.
- His revelation is always about the glory of God and the wellbeing of the church (in the Old Testament the wellbeing of the people)

We know that revelations and predictions do occur.

- But as we hear in the Formulary for Holy Communion, a church member who dabbles in fortune-telling and such like things may not partake of it or the sacrament of baptism because these things are not to the glory of God.

We read of Jacob receiving in a dream a revelation from God that all his flock would be streaked, speckled or spotted. (Genesis 31:10-12)

- Likewise the Lord at Gibeon appeared to Solomon in a dream at night and told him that he should ask the Lord whatever he desired to have.
- In such visions people see and hear the Lord.

The New Testament tells of an angel appearing to Joseph in a dream and giving him a command from God.

- This is exceptional as Joseph is not an office bearer – but he is the father of Christ.
- He is therefore an extraordinary person.

It can therefore not be denied that the Lord revealed Himself to certain people in a vision or a dream.

- But we must be sober enough to see that God shows a definite pattern of conduct in doing so, from the beginning until now.
- As Scripture has demonstrated.

But we are concerned with the problem as it is today. We should therefore read what else God says about it and what He says is not complimentary.

In 2 Thessalonians 2 it is written that the Lord will permit the anti-christ to delude the people with all kinds of temptations into apostasy.

The Lord will give Satan the ability to make some people perform counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders and a lying spirit is sent among the people.

- We read in verse 11: **For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie...**
- Spiritually we must therefore be wide awake to test the spirits and to be able to distinguish the truth – especially as Micah writes that eventually these people will be ashamed and disgraced because there will be no answer from God!
- Their predictions were therefore not revelation from God.

Micah 3 verse 11 warns us that these people who call themselves seers and dabble in fortune-telling claim that the Lord is with them.
It is therefore a difficult matter.

Let us re-read Micah 3 verse 8:

But as for me, I am filled with power, with the spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin.

“But as for me, I am filled with the spirit of the LORD...”

- That is not strange.
- Daniel and Ezekiel saw visions when the Spirit of the LORD was upon them and sometimes transported them. Jacob was afraid when the LORD appeared.

In order to prophesy truthfully one must have the guidance of the Holy Spirit. There is no other possibility.

- Among us, who are Christians of the New Testament, the Holy Spirit is even stronger because He dwells in us through Jesus Christ.
- The Lord Jesus Christ wants us to distinguish right from wrong.
- He wants us to see how we must live according to His Word and His promises – and in obedience.

For this the Lord Jesus died.

- So that in this way He could obtain this right for us.
- For this He sent the Holy Spirit to us – to guide us to God in spiritual foresight.

But note the terrible consequences of dabbling in fortune-telling and prophesying.

- If you are a Christian this can only be done through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- The same applies to the believing of fortune-tellers and diviners. If you are wrong you have sinned against the Holy Spirit and this is the one sin that God never forgives.

Many of us read useless articles about what the stars foretell.

- That is the same as listening to the predictions from these seers and taking them seriously.
- That is why such people may not partake of the Holy Communion – because God proclaims thereby that He does not allow such people into His kingdom.

Beloved, nowadays so many predictions are published – prophecies by Siener Van Rensburg and Nostradamus and the Incas or Maya.

Many of us discuss these matters and some of us believe them, or fear that they might be true. Turn away from these things for in them lies death.

The Bible tells us this in our text:

Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them. (Micah 3:6)

Amen.

Closing prayer.

Closing Psalm: 138:1.

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face towards you and give you peace.

Amen

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