

Astrology

by Rebecca S. May

- *What is astrology?*
- *Does astrology work?*
- *What does the Bible say about astrology?*
- *Is it a sin to read your horoscope?*

Astrology believes and teaches that the celestial bodies (stars and/or planets) mystically influence the lives of people on earth. This influence originates from the time of birth and continues throughout a person's life. The interpretation of each person's particular influence as revealed in the stars is recorded on an astrological chart or horoscope. The horoscope categorizes people under twelve signs of the zodiac which means 'circle of animals.' This chart identifies the position of the constellations at the moment of a baby's first breath, thus determining the destiny and character of every person. Since the planets change positions, astrologists develop new charts called progressed horoscopes (like the ones published in newspapers) to determine the planets' current influences on people.

Astrology is a belief which goes back as far as ancient Mesopotamia where Babylonians were known for their worship of the stars. Whether you worship the stars, as ancient Babylon did, or you believe that the pattern which exists within the constellations has magical correspondence revealed symbolically on earth, the belief in astrology exists for the same reason: a desire to predict the future of an individual's life.

Astrology and Science

Astronomy is the reputable science of observing the stars, planets, and constellations for the purpose of studying their characteristics as celestial bodies. Astrology is not the same as astronomy. Astrology claims that its conclusions are based on 4,000 years of observation, yet its purpose is not scientific study but spiritual security, it desires a knowledge of the future.

As Michael Gauquelin states in his book, "The Scientific Bases of Astrology: Myth or Reality" (New York: Stein and Day, 1973, p. 145), "Every attempt, whether of astrologers or scientists, to produce evidence of the validity of astrological laws has been in vain. It is now quite certain that the signs in the sky which presided over our births have no power whatever or play any part however humble in the totality of affects, random and otherwise, which form the fabric of our lives and mold our impulses to action. Confronted with science, modern and traditional astrology are seen to be imaginary doctrines."

Furthermore, a study performed and recorded by "The Skeptical Inquirer" (Culver and Ianna, pp. 169-179), examined over 3,000 predictions by leading astrologers and astrology publications, revealing a 90% failure rate in astrological predictions. John Ankerberg states in his book, "The Facts on Astrology" (The Anker Series, pp. 36-37), "We can state fairly and accurately that it has been scientifically proven that the heavens do not influence us in the manner astrologers claim. To our knowledge, astrology has failed every test ever given."

Since astrology cannot be defined as science and can only be defined and defended as religion, any successful predictions gained astrologically concerning someone's future can only be achieved by random chance or supernaturally by demonic spirits.

Astrology and the Occult

A belief or action can be classified as occultic if it is involved in any way in the three broad categories of the occult

witchcraft, fortune-telling, and magic. These, along with all subsections of the occult, are involved in supernatural activity, specifically demonic interaction.

Because astrology is a religious belief which attempts to predict the future of people on earth, it is directly related to occultic practices which use divination. Divination is any attempt to secure supernatural knowledge about the future. One of the oldest occultic practices using divination is fortune-telling. Astrology, palm reading, tarot cards, ouija boards, numerology, and the use of crystal balls, are all forms of fortune-telling.

God very clearly objects to all forms of the occult and all participation in any aspect of occultic practice. *When you enter the land which the Lord your God gives you, you shall not learn to imitate the detestable things of those nations. There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one who uses divination, one who practices witchcraft, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who casts a spell, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For whoever does these things is detestable to the Lord; and because of these detestable things the Lord your God will drive them out before you. You shall be blameless before the Lord your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the Lord your God has not allowed you {to do} so* (Deuteronomy 18:9-14; see also Galatians 5:20; and Acts 13:6-12; 19:19).

The Bible is also clear concerning the future for those who participate in the occult. *And when they say to you, 'Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,' should not a people consult their God? {Should they} {consult} the dead on behalf of the living? To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn* (Isaiah 8:19-20).

Astrology and the Bible

Many astrologists teach that the Bible supports the use of the stars to predict the future by claiming that the Greek word "magi" (magoz, literally "magician" and implies astrologer or astronomer) described in Matthew 2:1-12 were led to baby Jesus by a star. The problem with that is:

- (1) The star the magi saw may have not been a star at all, since the Greek word for star (aster) was also used to describe any great brilliance or radiance, such as is associated with the glory of Christ (Matthew 17:2; Acts 9:3; 26:13; Revelation 1:16; and 21:23).
- (2) The reason for the magi's interest in Christ, while not revealed in Scripture, could have been the result of Jews they were exposed to who had remained in Babylon after the exile or to the 330 Old Testament prophetic writings describing the birth of Christ.
- (3) That the magi were not following the star is clear from the fact that they had to inquire about where Jesus was born. They saw the star in the east but there is no evidence that it continued to shine or that it led them to Jerusalem. It was not until they were told the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah (Matthew 2:5-6) that the star reappeared and then guided them not only to Bethlehem but to the exact place *where the child was* (Matthew 2:9). (John MacArthur, "The New Testament Commentary: Matthew 1-7," p. 30).
- (4) Finally, the magi were not trying to find Christ because of any interest in a star or a desire to predict their personal futures but because of an intense desire to worship the King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2).

The Bible reveals an all-out assault on the sin of star worship. God said to Israel, *It was not to Me that you offered victims and sacrifices. You also took along the star of the god Rompha, the images which you made to worship them. I will also remove you beyond Babylon* (Acts 7:42-43).

It is this sin, in fact, which has caused God to abandon His people (Isaiah 2:6) because whether they have become secretly enticed (Job 31:26-28) or have engaged in the worship of the stars, their fate is the same. *Stand {fast} now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. Let now the astrologers, those who prophesy by the stars, those who predict by the new moons, stand up and save you from what will come upon you. Behold, they have become like stubble, fire burns them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame* (Isaiah 47:12-14).

In the book of Ezekiel God brings Ezekiel to the entrance of the Temple and shows him the great abominations of the house of Israel. As Ezekiel witnesses the wicked, detestable idolatry being committed, God says, *Yet you will see still greater*

abominations than these. He then shows Ezekiel 25 men who were prostrating themselves towards the sun, and God said to him, *Do you see {this}, son of man? Is it too light a thing for the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they have committed here, Therefore, I indeed shall deal in wrath. My eye will have no pity nor shall I spare; and though they cry in My ears with a loud voice, yet I shall not listen to them* (Ezekiel 8:13-18).

Astrology, like all forms of idolatry, has *exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man* (Romans 1:23). It has denied who God is; both creator and controller of the stars. *Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these {stars}, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of {His} power not one {of them} is missing* (Isaiah 40:26). *But immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken* (Matthew 24:29).

Questions and Answers

Q: *What is astrology?*

A: Astrology is an occultic practice which believes the constellations both influence and predict the future of the lives of people on earth.

Q: *Does astrology work?*

A: Not scientifically. Any successful predictions gained astrologically can only be achieved by random chance or demonic spirits.

Q: *What does the Bible say about astrology?*

A: The Bible associates astrology with the occultic practices of soothsaying, sorcery, and consulting mediums and spiritists. This is believing someone or something else is in control instead of God (Isaiah 8:19-20).

Q: *Is it a sin to read your horoscope?*

A: Yes. To look towards the celestial bodies indicates a belief in their effects on your life. If you have done this, you have denied God by committing idolatry (Job 31:26-28). Confess this sin to God and ask God to forgive you (1 John 1:9) and don't do it again.