

Astrology, Horoscopes, Signs of the Zodiac, and the Bible

What Is Astrology?

Astrology is "the ancient art or science of divining the fate and future of human beings from indications given by the positions of the stars and other heavenly bodies" - *Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 2, p. 575, 1956*. It assumes that our lives are largely influenced (though not completely determined) by the position and movement of heavenly bodies.

Horoscope is a chart of the position of the heavenly bodies, used to predict their influence on people's lives.

Zodiac is a narrow strip or belt of the heavens in which the sun, moon, and principle planets appear as the earth revolves around the sun. This zone is divided into twelve sections, each of which contains a constellation (group of stars) for which that section has been named. Each of these 12 constellations is called a "sign of the Zodiac." Whatever section the sun could be found in at the time of year when a person is born, that section is said to be the sign under which that person was born.

Occult is defined as: "magic, astrology, and other alleged sciences claiming use or knowledge of secret, mysterious, or supernatural agencies" - *Random House College Dictionary*. Other occult practices include witchcraft and sorcery, Satanism, spiritualism, fortune-telling, and psychics.

By definition, **astrology is part of the occult**. It is associated with a hosts of other practices that are specifically condemned in Scripture. This should lead us to at least question astrology.

The History of Astrology

Astrology began in ancient Babylon.

Ancient people realized that the sun was essential to man's needs, so they concluded that other heavenly bodies must be too. They thought that the largest heavenly bodies must be the most important, so they named the sun, moon, and largest planets after their main gods and the stars after lesser deities.

The movements of heavenly bodies were thought to represent activities of the gods. By studying these movements, men hoped to determine the will of the gods and so predict the future. If the heavenly bodies moved a certain way and certain events followed, then the next time they moved that way, similar things should happen.

The principles of astrology were formalized by the Greeks.

Some 2000 years ago the Greeks studied the heavenly bodies mathematically and "scientifically" and defined the signs of the Zodiac. The names of Greek and Roman gods were then assigned to the planets.

So historically **astrology is rooted in pagan idolatry**. The basic concept of astrology - that the movements of heavenly bodies control our lives - is heathen idolatry from the foundation up.

Reasons for the Current Popularity of Astrology

Our society is increasingly accepting pagan concepts. Since astrology is essentially pagan, we should not be surprised to see it becoming more popular. Specifically, astrology interests modern Americans for these reasons:

*** Astrology attempts to predict the future.**

People are always fascinated by the future. This is especially true when the future looks bleak (economic problems, war, family problems).

*** Astrology claims to analyze one's character.**

People love to hear what others say about them, especially if they think no one pays attention to them. When people feel like a number in a crowd, anything that emphasizes individual character makes them feel important.

*** Astrology gives advice for guiding ones' life.**

People seek solutions to their problems: advice for business deals and financial investments, marriage and family problems, etc. This is why advice columns and self-help books are so popular. Especially when times are troubled, astrology purports to offer solutions and guidance.

*** Astrology offers an explanation for life.**

People wonder why things happen the way they do, and what is the meaning of life. Astrology claims to explain the determining forces behind what's happening.

*** Astrology offers a unique experience and a sense of being special.**

People are often bored with life. Their jobs and lives are routine. Anything different or unique fascinates them. They may think they are gaining inside information others don't have or are becoming part of those "in the know."

In short, people pursue astrology for many of the same reasons people seek cults and other aspects of the Occult.

The Scientific Basis for Astrology

Despite the fact astrology began in pagan superstition, efforts have been made to find a scientific basis for it. However:

1. There is no evidence that heavenly bodies can influence character.

You are a living, intelligent being. Your character is formed by living, intelligent beings: inheritance from your ancestors, influence of family and friends, and especially your own choices and decisions. The sun, moon, and planets are all lifeless and unintelligent. How can they form your character?

2. There is no proof that the position of these bodies at the time of your birth can influence your life now.

Heavenly bodies do have some physical influence. The sun gives energy, all the bodies give light, the moon's gravity causes tides, etc. But all these influence affect everyone in an area equally, regardless of what time of year you were born.

3. The calendar astrology uses to determine the sign of your birth does not agree with the present position of the constellations!

In the technical sense of the word the 12 "signs" [of the Zodiac] are geometrical divisions 30 degrees in extent counting from the position of the sun at the vernal equinox. In the time of Hipparchus [2000 years ago when the signs of the Zodiac were defined] the signs corresponded fairly closely with the constellations; that is to say, the first sign (called Aries) corresponded with the constellation Aries.

Owing to precession [wobbling of the earth's axis] there is now a discrepancy amounting to the breadth of a whole sign, so that the sign Aries is occupied by the constellation Pisces" - **Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 23, p. 959.**

So, when astrology was formalized 2000 years ago, the constellations were at certain locations in the sky at certain times of the year. If you were born at a certain time of the year, astrology says you were born under a certain sign, because that's where that constellation was at that time of the year 2000 years ago.

But the earth wobbles slightly, like a top wobbling on its axis. So now, 2000 years later, the constellations are not where astrology says they should be at the time of your birth. In fact, they are out of step by a whole sign!

So because you were born at a certain time of the year, astrology says you are born under a certain sign, meaning a constellation was at a certain point when you were born. But in fact, the constellation of that sign was not at all where they say it was!

But remember that the position of the stars is supposed to be what determines your character and destiny. The constellation that you were really born under is the next one down the line. Hence, the practice of astrology contradicts the theory of astrology. If there ever was any validity in its predictions, there is none any more.

Why should Christians be guided by and trust their future to a self-contradictory system?

What Does the Bible Say about Astrology?

A. Astrology Is False Prophecy.

By definition, astrology attempts to predict the future. Are its predictions accurate?

Astrology is unreliable.

Daniel 4:7; (2:10,11; 5:7,8) - On three occasions astrologers and other occult experts were asked to predict the future. Each time they failed, but Daniel succeeded by God's power.

[Note: "Enchanters" in ASV = "astrologers" in KJV. "Chaldeans" in ASV is "astrologers" in NIV.]

God forbids His people to place serious confidence in astrology.

Deuteronomy 18:9-14,18-22 - Occult practices, including divination, are an abomination to God. V14 specifically forbids listening to diviners. "Divining" is attempting to predict the future by occult or mystical methods. But astrology is part of the occult and attempts to predict the future. So by definition, astrology constitutes occult divination, which God forbids (note again the Britannica definition above).

V 21,22 - If one claims to know the future, but his predictions do not come true, do not fear him! The Bible shows that astrologers cannot predict the future with certainty, and most astrologers will admit their predictions are often incorrect.

2 Kings 17:16-18 - God destroyed Israel for practicing idolatry, worshiping "the host of heaven" (stars and planets), using "divination" [ASV; cf. "witchcraft and soothsaying" in NKJV], and other occult practices.

Jeremiah 10:2 - God's people were expressly forbidden to be concerned about the "signs of heaven," that heathen people trusted in. This clearly includes astrology. God's people were not to learn their ways!

The Old Testament clearly says that the future cannot be predicted accurately by the stars. If it could not be done then, it cannot be done now. To place trust in such methods is to learn the ways of the heathen, which is just as wrong now as it was then.

[Ezek. 21:21; 12:24; 13:6-9,23; 21:29; 22:28; Isaiah 44:24,25; Acts 16:16-19; Jer. 27:9,10; 14:14; Mic. 3:6-11; Zech. 10:2]

B. Astrology Is a False Standard of Guidance.

Astrology attempts to advise people how to act, based on the position of the stars, etc. So people "trust their lucky stars" and "thank their lucky stars." They seek guidance from some Occult source other than God.

Isaiah 47:13,14 - Babylon originated astrology. God promised to destroy Babylon, then asked what the astrologers, stargazers, and monthly prognosticators would do to stop Him. All these were involved in astrology, but they were powerless against God.

Daniel 1:19,20 - Daniel and friends were ten times better in giving wisdom and guidance than all the Babylonian magicians and astrologers ["enchanters" - ASV].

Deuteronomy 18:15,18-20 - Having forbidden the occult (including astrology) (***V 9-14***), God predicted a spokesman like Moses whom we should listen to. This refers to Jesus (***Acts 3:22,23***). One who speaks differently from His message should die.

The teachings of Jesus provide all things that pertain to life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3) and every good work (***2 Timothy 3:16,17***). What do we need astrology for? Bible writers reveal true wisdom to guide your life. Astrologers may occasionally guess right, but the Bible is always right. Yet some people will read their horoscope every day, but will go days without opening the Bible!

The sun, moon, and stars are lifeless, unintelligent objects. They can no more tell what your future holds or how to live your life than a rock or mud puddle can! If you want real wisdom, go to the all-wise, all-powerful Creator who made the sun, moon, and stars!

[Prov. 3:5,6; Acts 17:28; Matt. 11:28; 6:25-34; Rom. 8:28]

C. Astrology Is a Form of Idolatry.

Astrology originally involved direct worship of heavenly bodies.

Deuteronomy 4:15-19 - God warns His people not to worship idols, including the sun, moon, and stars - called the "host of heaven."

2 Kings 21:1-3 - The evil king Manasseh practiced idolatry, worshiped the host of heaven, and otherwise participated in the Occult (***v6***).

2 Kings 23:5 - When Josiah became king, he removed idolatry, including worship of the sun, moon, the constellations, and host of heaven. "Constellations" (NKJV) = "the Zodiac" (NKJV footnote; cf. Genesis) or the "12 signs" (ASV footnote).

Astrology from its very beginning was a form of idolatry forbidden by God.

[Deuteronomy 17:2-5; Amos 5:25,26; Acts 7:42,43; Deut. 13:1-5; Jer. 19:13; Zeph. 1:5]

Astrology today still substitutes heavenly bodies for God.

It is possible to practice idolatry without intentionally performing worship rituals. Coveting, for example, is idolatry (***Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5***). Idolatry is anything that puts created things in the position that only God should occupy.

The Bible teaches that no one but God can predict our future lives.

James 4:14 - Man does not know what will happen tomorrow.

Proverbs 27:1 - You don't know what a day may bring forth.

Daniel 2:27,28 - Astrologers could not interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream (a prediction of the future), but God could do so.

Isaiah 41:21-23; 42:8,9 - God rests His claim to Deity on His ability to predict the future. He challenges idols to prove they are gods by telling the future.

If we believe the God of the Bible is the only true God, then we must conclude that stars cannot predict the future. To believe that stars can predict the future is to claim they have the power of gods! It puts the stars in place of God and gives the glory of God to others. Intentionally or not, that is a form of idolatry, which God forbids.

The Bible teaches that only God can give rules for moral and spiritual guidance of our lives.

Isaiah 8:19,20 - Do not seek occult teachers, but seek God. Where do you find His will? In the law, and the testimony. When people teach us to seek spiritual guidance from sources other than God's word (as the occult does), there is no light in them.

Galatians 1:8,9 - Anyone who preaches a different gospel - a different spiritual source of guidance for our lives - is accursed. Why? Because they have assumed a position that only God can occupy.

"Astrology has evolved from the crude, superstitious worship of the planets to the present sophisticated, ... superstitious worship of the planets" - Raymond Harris.

Divine revelation is complete in Scripture (***2 Tim. 3:16,17***). Anytime we exalt a creature to a position only God can rightly occupy, we are guilty of idolatry.

[Isaiah 55:8,9; Rom. 1:25]

Conclusion

Galatians 4:8,9 - Gentiles had been idol worshipers, but were converted to the true God. Why then go back to the principles of heathenism? Idolatry is as clearly forbidden today as in the Old Testament.

[2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:14ff; etc.]

Everything that astrology claims to accomplish is fulfilled for Christians through Jesus Christ and His word.

* The true meaning of life is revealed only in God's word, not in Occult appeals to other forces.

* The true understanding of your character and what kind of person you should seek to become can be found in God's word, not in the Occult.

* The best way to prepare for the future is found in God's word. It may not tell everything people want to know about the future, but it tells everything we need to know. It is the only sure way to know what God plans for the future, especially life after death.

All true spiritual needs of the believer are met through God and His word. Why look elsewhere? To seek answers in astrology is to show a lack of faith in God and to turn instead to heathen idolatry.

1 Thessalonians 5:22 - Let us abstain from every form (appearance) of evil. **[Col. 2:18,19; Acts 19:19]**

Are you following God's true word or false spiritual guides? Have you become a true follower of Jesus?
Are you serving Him faithfully?