

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

A Critical Evaluation of Astrology

By Nicholas Liguori

Astrology Explained

Astrology has become very popular among today's generation, and although some may dismiss it as silly entertainment, astrology is a system that claims to offer serious answers to important questions like "Who should I marry?" and "What does the future hold for me?" Yes, and it would be a mistake to think that everyone views astrology as merely a fun topic for conversation, for it is a well-known (and alarming) fact that many decisions of the Reagan administration were made in light of a horoscope reading.¹ This ancient system—which has been in existence for perhaps 5000 years, and which was practiced by such groups as the Sumerians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Indians—has been taken seriously by enough people to merit a serious investigation.

Astrologers assert that the position of the stars and planets has a profound influence on our lives. Now if they mean that we depend on sunlight for photosynthesis, and the moon and sun for the tides of the sea, and that the cycle of the moon may affect women's menstrual cycles—then we should be obliged to agree.

However, astrologers do not stop here. Their system would have us believe that the position of these celestial bodies *determines* our every action and emotion! The notion is that the microcosm (man) is a small reflection of the macrocosm (the universe), and that every movement of the macrocosm (the stars and planets) is accompanied by a similar change in the microcosm (man). Using a horoscope device, the time of one's birth, put together with the latitude and longitude of one's birthplace, gives the astrologer all the information he needs. Then with the aid of astrological charts and tables, a series of conversions and calculations give one's "ascendant"—the zodiac sign or constellation that was rising on the eastern horizon at the time and location of one's birth. Next the astrologer aligns the ascendant on the outer ring of the horoscope board with a predetermined point (nine o'clock) on the horoscope's inner circle. Finally, based on this alignment, the astrologer "reads" or interprets the horoscope and determines how the stars and planets are going to influence your life in the near and/or distant future.

Astrology Evaluated

At minimum we may observe that astrology is an occult system, as the horoscope alignment is meaningless until "interpreted," and this interpretation can only be revealed by those initiated into the system, those who understand its secret, esoteric workings. As such we may suggest the use of a more descriptive term—"astromancy"—for it is really another form of divination which may be compared to cartomancy or palmistry. It is the purpose of this writer to show that astrology is *contradicted by science* at every level, and that experience exposes it as a *worthless, even dangerous, fraud*. Then we will see that for the Christian, astrology is totally *unacceptable*. It is merely another one of Satan's deceptions. We have also

¹ See book written by former Chief of Staff Donald Reagan, *For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).

included testimonies of individuals who were rescued from astrology to serve the one who holds the future in his hands—our God and savior Jesus Christ.

Astrology Contradicts Science

In September of 1975, 186 leading American scientists, along with 18 Nobel Prize winners, reproved "the pretentious claims of astrological charlatans"—the notion that our lives are ordained and foretold by the motion of the stars—as without any basis in science.² In other words, astronomy detests astrology.

First, astrology is based on the false premise of the *geocentric theory*, the notion that all celestial bodies revolve around the earth, which was refuted by Copernicus in the early 16th century. Another failure of astrology is that modern science has revealed three additional planets in our solar system which the unaided eye of ancient astrologers had been unable to observe—Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Hence these were not accounted for in the astrological charts.

Another embarrassment for astrology is precession. The constellations have shifted considerably since ancient times, as Kenneth Boa describes in his work, *Cults, World Religions, and You*:

"The twelve signs of the zodiac originally corresponded with the twelve constellations of the same names. But due to precession, the constellations have shifted ... Thus, if a person is born on September 1, astrologers would call him a Virgo (the sign the sun is in at that date), but the sun is actually in the constellation Leo at that date. So there are two different zodiacs: one which slowly moves (the sidereal zodiac) and one which is stationary (the tropical zodiac). Which zodiac should be used?"³

Since astrology fails to account for precession, its charts based on uniformity are unfounded.

Twins also disprove astrology, which would have us believe that time and location of birth determines fate and personality. But we know from experience that twins often live completely different lives.

Astrology is Harmful

I think if we're honest, we will admit that astrology in itself does not have any predictive value, for we see that different astrologers give different horoscope readings. That is, starting with the same inputs—time and location of one's birth—astrologers arrive at different outputs! Recall that these readings are based on a mystical "interpretation" of the horoscope and are obtained only through esoteric means.

Astrological predictions are incredibly vague and ambiguous. Almost any event can be construed as a fulfillment to these predictions or guidances. But even when a specific prediction

² McDowell, *Handbook of Today's Religions* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1992), 161.

³ Kenneth Boa, *op. cit.* (Wheaton, IL: Victor, 1977), 124-125; quoted in McDowell, *Handbook of Today's Religions*, 163-164.

is fulfilled—such as one newspaper’s prediction that President Kennedy would shortly die, which tragically came to pass only two months later—we should not imagine that the astrologer somewhat obtained hidden knowledge through his horoscope. For if we collected all the horoscope readings from that period, we would find a multitude of differing prognostications—some saying that Kennedy would be reelected in 1964, and others saying that he would step down during this term. When so many diverse predictions are made, of course some of them are going to be right. But astrology survives because people only remember the accurate predictions, while the false ones are quickly forgotten.⁴

Koch gives another important psychological reason for the apparent success of some readings:

“The person who seeks advice from an astrologer comes with a certain degree of readiness to believe the horoscope. Thus predisposition leads to an auto-suggestion to order his life according to the horoscope, and thus to contribute to its fulfillment.”⁵

Astrology is a terrible form of fraud that financially exploits the ignorant. Those who seek a horoscope reading risk tremendous financial loss as well as personal suffering. A worldview that teaches a fatalistic, deterministic view of life is downright depressing and calls into question our basic human values of freedom and personality. Kurt Koch shares the following testimony from an evangelistic effort in Brazil:

“A young woman who was engaged to be married sought out an astrologer and had her horoscope cast. The astrologer wrote the following prediction: “Your engagement will break up. This man will not marry you. You will not marry at all, but remain single.” The girl was stunned. She was very much in love with her fiancé and could not bear the thought of losing him. She was constantly worried that the engagement would break up and that she would never marry. She became overpowered by melancholia and resolved to put an end to her life. On the day when she was planning to carry out her resolve, she was stopped by a friend of her fiancé. Upon that one’s advice, she came to me for counseling, confessed the whole story, repented, and surrendered her life to Christ. Not long afterward, her fiancé came to be counseled too. He was also ready to give his life to Christ. They were married, and today they have several children and are enjoying a happy marriage. In this case, Christ prevented the disaster which had been set afoot by the astrologer.”⁶

Astrology is Demonic and Unbiblical

We have seen that the system of astrology (or astromancy) is unjustified as a means of obtaining special knowledge or guidance. But do we then dismiss *all* reports of astrological fulfillments? Not at all. C. S. Lewis has famously written:

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an unhealthy interest in them. They [demons] are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.”⁷

We freely admit—and believe there is evidence to show—that in some rare predictions show evidence of supernatural

fulfillment. But even in these rare cases when astrology succeeds supernaturally, it is not because of the legitimacy of the method or the skill of the astrologer. Rather, its power lies in the *demonic* forces of evil. From years of experience counseling people about the occult, Koch writes that “not all [astrology] is swindle and humbug ... This is equally true of other forms of fortunetelling such as palmistry, card-laying, fortunetelling by rod or pendulum and other occult arts.”⁸

To the Christian these practices are unacceptable, not because they are powerless but because they seek supernatural knowledge through occult means. The Old Testament specifically mentions astrology and categorically condemns it:

“You are wearied with your many counsels; 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 47:13-14)

“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.” (Deuteronomy 19:9-12)

“Thus says the LORD, “Do not learn the way of the nations, and do not be terrified by the signs of the heavens although the nations are terrified by them;”” (Jeremiah 10:2)

Summary

In his book *Occult ABC*, Kurt Koch shares a testimony about a former astrologer whose life was radically changed after he turned to Christ. He led dozens of people to Christ in the following months, and he travels giving lectures on astrology and the occult, warning people about these techniques he once practiced, urging them to turn to Jesus Christ, who is the true Lord of heaven and earth.⁹

Astrology, unlike the legitimate field of astronomy, is without any basis in science. This system really ought to be named astromancy, for it is occultic rather than scientific. Its assumption that our lives are ordained by the movement of the planets, is unfounded and can have tragic results in personal experience. The Bible warns that astrology is demonic and sinful. Jesus Christ died to forgive you for seeking wisdom in astrology.

⁴ Kurt Koch, *Christian Counseling and Occultism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1973), 97-98.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁶ Kurt Koch, *Occult ABC* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 1980), 20-21.

⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: MacMilan, 1961), preface.

⁸ Koch, *Occult ABC*, 19.

⁹ Koch, *op. cit.*, 326-328.