

Guided by God or the Stars?

By *John R. Gibson*

What's your astrological sign? Under what sign of the Zodiac were you born? Do you regularly, or even occasionally, seek guidance from your horoscope? Do you believe that one's sign determines his or her character and will even determine one's compatibility with those of a different sign? While most people probably do not take such things seriously, many do and I want to offer two reasons Christians should completely and thoroughly reject astrology.

First, astrology implies that forces other than Almighty God are in control. When God created the sun, moon, and stars (Genesis 1:14-17), He gave the sun power to heat the earth, and both the sun and the moon provide light. The Lord also made the moon to control the tides which serve a very useful purpose in cleansing the bays and harbors. And before we had the technology that exists today the stars were vital to navigation on both land and sea. All of this to say that the sun, moon, and stars were intended by God to play important roles in the lives of people, just not the roles assigned them in astrology.

If you want to know which way is north the stars can help, but if you want to know which direction your life should take, for that you will need the guidance God has provided in Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). Long ago Isaiah announced that judgment was coming upon Babylon, and with sarcasm suggested that they turn to "the astrologers, the stargazers, and the monthly prognosticators" so that they might "stand up and save you from what shall come upon you" (Isaiah 47:12, 13). The prophet then adds that these who gaze at the stars for guidance will not only be unable to help the people, but will themselves be destroyed by His judgment against Babylon (Isaiah 47:14, 15).

Astrology is condemned because it fails the same challenge the Lord issued to the idols in Isaiah 41:22 when He called upon them to "declare to us things to come." The idols of eighth century B.C. Israel could not foretell the future and were denounced as "nothing" (Isaiah 41:24), and the same can be said of astrologers. Astrologers may occasionally guess right, but have never been able to provide consistently correct insight into the future. Know that the Lord God reigns and has not given control of this universe to Saturn, Orion, or any other celestial object. To participate in astrology is to deny that God is Almighty!

Second, to believe that our destiny is determined by the sign under which we were born is to deny the plain teachings of Scripture regarding individual responsibility and accountability. When did God ever excuse anyone's behavior because "that's the way Capricorns are"? The statement that "the soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20) will hold true regardless of how the stars were aligned on the day of one's birth or at the time of one's sin. The Bible frequently speaks of choosing either to serve God or to reject Him and never once does it even hint that this choice is determined by anything other than our own freewill. Astrology is wrong to suggest that our character is determined by the stars and not our own choice of flesh versus Spirit (Galatians 5:13-26). That man is fully capable of choice is seen in many passages, including but not limited to Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Joshua 24:14, 15; Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17; et al.

And what about this notion that people may be incompatible because of the signs under which they were born? For example, astrologists say Capricorns and Leos will have turbulent relationships, while a Virgo will have similar difficulties with an Aries. The Bible repeatedly teaches “love your neighbor as yourself” (e.g. Galatians 5:13) and never even hints that we are excused from this if our neighbor is of the wrong astrological sign. Do we honestly think we will be granted an exemption from the teachings of Matthew 5:44 because we were astrologically incompatible?

Though astrology is not specifically mentioned in Deuteronomy 18, the Lord strongly denounced everything associated with the occult and told the Israelites to avoid all association with it. “There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). The Canaanites were driven out of the land because they sought guidance from sources and powers other than God—will the Lord be any more pleased today if we are looking to the skies and not the Scriptures?

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