

Astrology: Fortune-Telling by the Stars

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Introduction

Widespread popularity & use of astrology: numerous books, astrology columns in most newspapers, even horoscope by phone

History of Astrology

Origin lost in past, but already important in Babylonian civilization; there it mostly takes the form of menologies, i.e., lunar/solar astrology of lucky/unlucky days; mostly for nobility

Conquest of East by Alexander the Great (c330 BC) combines Greek science, individualism with Babylonian astrology to produce classic individual astrology using birth horoscopes, 7 planets, 12 signs of zodiac, 12 houses of sky

This form has had continuing influence in the West, though both Judaism and Christianity basically hostile; more or less underground during Medieval period, resurfaces in Renaissance, underground again in Reformation countries, recently resurfacing again

Scientific Problems for Astrology

1. The old astrology viewed the planets & stars as gods (or in Judeo-Xn circles, as angels); telescopic views and landings on planets indicate they are worlds like ours.
2. With the old idea that the earth is the center of the universe, astrology seemed more likely than now, when we see that the earth is not even the center of our solar system. Neither the gravitational nor magnetic forces exerted by the planets are significant on earth.
3. Most modern astrologers take no account of the fact that we have discovered 3 new planets since their technique was designed.
4. Likewise, few take into account that the precession of the equinoxes has shifted the sun signs by about one month each.
5. Even in antiquity, the problem of time-twins was raised.
6. The zodiac itself is just an arbitrary convention for grouping the stars, having no reality among the stars themselves.

Biblical Problems for Astrology

1. The Bible forbids divination (occult guidance techniques) as an abomination to God (Deut 18:9-13), replacing it with Biblical revelation which is selected & sent by God (Deut 18:14-22).

Deut 18:9-13 (NIV) *When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. 10 Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11 or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. 12 Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. 13 You must be blameless before the LORD your God.*

Deut 18:14-22 (NIV) *The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. 15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own brothers. You must listen to him. 16 For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die." 17 The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. 18 I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him. 19 If anyone does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account. 20 But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded him to say, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, must be put to death." 21 You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22 If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.*

2. Astrology cannot deliver from disaster anyway (Isa 47:13); only God can.

Isa 47:13 (NIV) *All the counsel you have received has only worn you out! Let your astrologers come forward, those stargazers who make predictions month by month, let them save you from what is coming upon you. 14 Surely they are like stubble; the fire will burn them up. They cannot even save themselves from the power of the flame. Here are no coals to warm anyone; here is no fire to sit by.*

Bibliography

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This talk can be found in PowerPoint format on the IBRI website www.ibri.org.