



The Lurking Deceit

Over the past few weeks, I have been burdened and lost sleep because lots of young Christians have substituted the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives for zodiac signs. There is a growing trend of Christians who have accepted zodiac signs as their guide to life (consciously or not). It has informed their choice of partner and made them accept the character traits proposed by the sign. Prayerfully read this.

What is Astrology?

Astrology is a type of divination that involves the forecasting of earthly and human events through the observation and interpretation of the fixed stars, the Sun, the Moon, and the planets. This ancient belief posits that a person's destiny can be determined by the patterns of the stars, sun, moon and planets. The "horoscope" is the chart that attempts to describe that destiny. Horoscopes became popular after newspapers started printing details of it in the 1930s in the US and other European countries. Several ancient cultures developed some form of astrology, with the oldest originating during the Old Babylonian period (2400 BC) in Mesopotamia (an area that covers much of modern Iraq and Kuwait, as well as parts of Syria and Turkey).

Astrology and the Bible

All accounts of astrology in the bible show that God detests the practice of it by His children. In Leviticus 19:26 the Lord instructs the people of Israel to stay away from it (Do not practice divination or seek omens). Isaiah 47 speaks about Babylon whose power relied on predictions made by stargazers and sorcerers.

Isaiah 47:13 “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”.

In Jeremiah 50 Babylon conquers Israel and assumes the conquest is due to her strength and power but we find out in Isaiah that it was because God was angry with His people that He allowed the Babylonians to conquer them. God told the Prophet Isaiah that it was His doing not theirs.

Isaiah 47:6 “I was angry with my people and desecrated my inheritance; I gave them into your hand...”

God challenges Babylon’s power (from stargazers and sorcerers) to save themselves from judgement. If they truly have real spiritual power, they should be able to deliver the people. Obviously, the stargazers and magicians fail with the final sentence of Isaiah 47 being **none shall save thee**.

One day a king had a dream and called his wise men (i.e. magicians, astrologers, sorcerers and the Chaldeans). He requested that they tell him the dream and interpret it. None could honor his request but a young man called Daniel. Daniel at the age of 17 years was taken from his home and brought to a strange land. Daniel was empowered by the Spirit of God and the Babylonians testified that he was ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers (Daniel 1:20). Daniel had more encounters with these astrologers and magicians over the course of his life. In each of these encounters, the Holy Spirit empowered Daniel to overcome.

1. Daniel was able to tell King Nebuchadnezzar his dream and interpret it (Daniel 2:19 – 41).
2. Daniel interpreted another dream Nebuchadnezzar had. (Daniel 4:19-27)
3. The famous writing on a wall by a hand was interpreted by Daniel after the astrologers and magicians failed to do so. This is the queen’s testimonial about Daniel to King Belshazzar that pushed him to call for Daniel’s help. **‘ There is a man in thy kingdom, in whom is the spirit of the holy gods; and in the days of thy father light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, was found in him; whom the king Nebuchadnezzar thy father, the king, I say, thy father, made master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers; Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding, interpreting of dreams, and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel, whom the king named Belteshazzar: now let Daniel be called, and he will shew the interpretation.’ Daniel 5:11-12.**

Daniel’s source was God. It was God who gave Daniel the ability to understand visions, dreams, complex problems etc (Daniel 1:17). He was a man of prayer. In the reign of King Darius, the presidents and advisors schemed to cut his source of power which was prayer (Daniel 6:5). An unrelenting Daniel continues to pray despite a law banning prayer. It was a habit borne out of revelation and not duty. Does this scheme of a law designed to ensure someone does not pray sound familiar? The bible says in Daniel 6:10 he continued to get down on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously. The word previously indicates a habit which both the spirit world and the physical world had noticed. Daniel’s response to the new law was prayer. Heaven’s response to the prayer of Daniel was deliverance from the lion’s den and his enemies. Daniel proved to many kings who ruled in different dispensations that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was and is the Almighty.

The case of the wise men?

In my readings and research, I have seen pastors justify the reading of zodiac signs and encouraging their members to practice it. One of the arguments was that the wise men used the star to locate Our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 2:2). The wise men also known as magi (a term we get the word magic) were astrologers, counsellors or in certain cultures were called wizards. The search by the magi for our Lord Jesus Christ is not the bible validating astrology. Rather, it indicates how pagans recognized Jesus as God. It shows that Jesus at age zero was and is the King of Kings. As David Mathis says, “These magi are not respected kings but pagan specialists in the supernatural, experts in astrology, magic, and divination, blatant violators of Old Testament law—and they are coming to worship Jesus.” It is evidence of the far-reaching nature of our God. He wants to give everyone the opportunity to come to Him.

Modern Christianity and Astrology

Have you noticed when you search for a music video or a movie on YouTube and a day or two later other music videos of the same genre by different artistes or other movies in the same category pop up without you knowing how? There is an algorithm that is in charge of making sure that you receive the best of whatever is of interest to you. In the same way, there are spirits attached to divination and sorcery who are invited by your own will (which God cannot touch). You decided to like them and other interested spirits are knocking on your door. For example, your curiosity to check how compatible you are with your crush opened the door for lust when you clicked to find out your zodiac sign. The Spirit of delay joined the party a few days later after you started reading more on it. Zodiac signs is one of the ways the devil has repackaged sorcery, made it cool and delivered it to our generation. It tries to find the will of God by other means than God has appointed. Our innermost desire to know more about ourselves and our future is answered by the Holy Spirit. The neglect of the Holy Spirit’s leading is the main reason some Christians have resorted to sorcery (knowingly or unknowingly) like King Saul. Just as Daniel overcame the Babylonian system, God is calling His people to come out of Babylon (Rev 18:4).

Consequences

“The wind [of God’s relentless wrath] has wrapped up Israel in its wings, And [in captivity] they will be ashamed because of their sacrifices [to calves, to sun, to moon, to stars, and to pagan gods]”

Hosea 4:19.

- Fear

Fear is one of the effects of indulging in astrology. 2 Timothy 1:7 tells us that God is not responsible for giving His children the spirit of fear. Rather, He gives the believer a spirit of love, power and a sound mind. Impliedly, spirits can be received or rejected. Fear gains entry into your life when you meddle in divination. A believer becomes bound to the speakings of the evil one. As Jesus taught us, demons at times move in groups. Fear and its friends are opportunists. I have witnessed how fear can work in the life of a believer. One of the first ways that God led me in casting out devils happened in my final year in the university. A lady upon the advice of a mutual friend came to see me about a problem she had. Curiosity led her to read horoscopes and she took it a step further by contacting a psychic via mail. Just as a prophet of God will give a word of knowledge and accurate predictions of an individual, the psychic told her about her past, present and future. At the time of meeting her, she had been told that she had three days to live. She believed the word of the psychic and was gripped with fear. I began to pray with her and saw God

deliver her from the bondage of the devil. This episode was the light that ignited my passion to see others seek the will of God for their lives rather than horoscopes.

- Missing God's will for your life

The will of God is mysterious (Ephesians 1:9). Just as the redemption of man was shrouded in the mystery of Jesus dying (1 Cor 2:7-8), the will of God for your life is hidden but can be unpacked. Dependence and confidence in divination will lead you out of the will of God. King Saul had made several mistakes in his life. What signified corruption in his heart was consulting a diviner. Saul was so far away from God that the Lord was not speaking to him. Saul going ahead to consult a medium showed that he had departed from the ways of God. The immediate consequence of fear is seen in 1 Samuel 28:20 after the meeting with the medium. Saul falls upon his own sword in 1 Samuel 31:4 and dies. The intention and purpose of God for Saul's life was never to die in this way. Continual disobedience and eventual consultation with a medium/omen broke the camel's back.

What to Do?

There is a way out if you have ever been involved with astrology. Firstly, Confess your faults and wrongdoing. Trust in God's faithfulness and justice in His word which says **"If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and confess our sins, He is faithful and just [true to His own nature and promises], and will forgive our sins and cleanse us continually from all unrighteousness [our wrongdoing, everything not in conformity with His will and purpose] "** 1 John 1:9.

Build yourself up to rely solely on the Holy Spirit by devoting yourself to Him through prayer and the word. One of the aims of the Holy Spirit is to guide you in the course of life. (John 16:13). His role cannot be substituted by creation. The Amplified Version of the bible gives a good description of some of the roles the Holy Spirit plays in a believer's life - Comforter, Advocate, Intercessor, Counselor and Strengthener (John 16:7).

Lastly, seek the counsel of your Pastor or Church leader. Hebrews 13:17 admonishes believers to submit and recognizing spiritual authority because they keep watch over our souls and continually guard our spiritual welfare.

In His Service

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