



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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Dear Readers,

THE CHRISTIAN'S RESPONSE TO ASTROLOGY

Astrology is a very lucrative business. Some use it to search for a good match for marriage, or when moving to a new home or when changing jobs. Others use it to make business decisions. Many are attracted to astrology because it seems to work, and because it gives them a sense of personal control over their lives.

However, not all things that appear to work are necessarily true and right. The standard for Christians in adopting any spiritually-based practice is not whether it works but whether God approves of it. We are admonished to "...believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 John 4:1a).

When Israel was about to enter the Promised Land, God gave them very strong warning against learning and adopting certain practices of the Canaanites (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). This included the use of divination, and the 'observing of times.' In Latin, 'observing of times' is translated *horoscopus* from which the term 'horoscope' is derived. However in this context the term, 'observing of times' refers generally to the practice of fortune-telling.

The Babylonians developed a system of fortune-telling using the movements of the sun, moon, stars and planets. They developed instruments to observe the positions of the heavenly bodies and also to measure time and speed accurately. They produced the world's first constellation maps and were able to accurately predict where the heavenly bodies would be at any specified time. This study of the stars is not wrong in itself. The psalmist said that "*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*" (Psalm 19:1) Astronomy is a legitimate science as it reveals the glorious wonders of God's created universe. It is only when such knowledge is misused that it became sinful.

Unfortunately, that was what the Babylonians did – they applied their superb scientific knowledge in a most sinful way when they turned it into a sophisticated method of fortune-telling called astrology. Astrology is based on the utterly false belief that events on Earth are represented by the positions and movements of the sun, moon, planets, and stars, and that the patterns of these heavenly bodies at the exact moment of a person's birth and their subsequent movements reflect that person's character and, therefore, destiny. The patterns are interpreted so as to understand, plan, or predict events on Earth. When Babylonian astrology found its way to Greece, it became popular there, and by the 1st century BC Greek astrologers had developed the horoscope of 12 zodiacal signs, 12 houses, 7 planets, and 5 major aspects that is the basis of modern horoscope interpretation.

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God has expressed His utter displeasure against astrology in Isaiah 47:13-14 – *"Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame: there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor fire to sit before it."*

Some attempt to claim that the Bible supports astrology. One verse that is often cited is Job 38:31 – *"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?"* (The Pleiades and Orion are visible constellations in the night sky) But the 'sweet influences' mentioned here has nothing to do with influencing events on earth. It is translated from the Hebrew word *ma'adannah*, which refers to the fact that the Pleiades is a huge chain of about 500 stars. Interestingly, high powered telescopes reveal that they are bound together by a delicate stream of nebulous matter!

Some also claim that the wise men from the east who came to worship Jesus (Matthew 2:2) had used astrology to predict His birth. The truth of the matter is that these wise men had no need of astrology to know that the new star heralded the birth of the King of Jews, because the Holy Scriptures to which they had access since the time of the Jewish captivity in Babylon already revealed both the sign of the star as well as the time when the Messiah of Israel was to be born (cf. Numbers 24:17; Isaiah 9:6 and Daniel 9:25). The wise men had evidently studied the Old Testament prophecies well.

Now that we have learned that the Bible speaks unequivocally against astrology let us consider the reasons behind this.

Astrology Diminishes the Glory of God

Isaiah 42:8 – *"I am the LORD: that is My name: and My glory will I not give to another, neither My praise to graven images."* One of the great attributes of God in which He is glorified is His omniscience. He alone knows all things and He alone ought to be consulted concerning things unknown. When the ungodly king Ahaziah fell sick and sent messengers to Ekron to inquire of the idol there whether he would recover from his illness or not, God sent His prophet Elijah to intercept those messengers with this word: *"Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?"* (2 Kings 1:3) Ahaziah should have enquired of the God of Israel instead of the god of Ekron. Because he failed to do this, God's judgment came upon him and he died shortly after that.

Astrology Diverts Our Trust away from God

In Psalm 56:3-4, we see David trusting God in times of great fear and uncertainty. He says, *"What time I am afraid, I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."* As much as we would all like to know what will happen to us, God wants us to be content to simply trust Him for whatever happens to us. Future events which are foretold in the Scriptures are all that is absolutely necessary for us to know at present, in order that we may live as we ought. As for the rest of our unknown future, we must simply be content to know that God knows it, and that He will order all things well for us. For the Christian, the right way to deal with any anxiety or concern about one's future is to pray. Prayer not only enables us to express our trust in God for the future, but it also brings God's help to prepare us to face it.

Astrology Delivers Souls into Bondage

It dominates their thoughts both consciously and subconsciously. Instead of offering peace and happiness, it makes them more insecure and fearful as they develop a phobia for things

that are contrary to their horoscopes. In the end, it runs their lives instead.

It is not surprising that the Devil would want to take full advantage of this. To keep people reading their horoscopes, he will make it seem to produce the desired results, so that they will believe that it really works. Astrology has been one of Satan's strategic recruitment centres to draw people into witchcraft and devil-worship. It gives them the illusion of being in control of their lives, and of having special knowledge that gives them special power to fulfill their desires. We must therefore stay clear of astrology and horoscope reading, since we are commanded in Ephesians 4:27 not to "*give place unto the Devil.*" We are also told in 2 Corinthians 2:11 not to be "*ignorant of his devices.*"

Conclusion

Astrology is absolutely incompatible with the Christian faith. We ought to have nothing to do with horoscopes, not even for amusement or out of curiosity. We should not even ask one another, "*What is your sign?*" as this only encourages people to believe in astrology.

Dear Reader, if you are in the habit of consulting your horoscope, then you are seeking to be your own master rather than giving God the rightful place as the Master of your life. At its very core astrology seeks after the control of one's destiny for selfish benefits. It is motivated by self-centeredness and greed, and not by faith, hope, and love.

Turn away from this, and turn to the Lord Jesus Christ who has absolute control over all the planets, the sun and moon and all the stars in the Universe. Why seek after such inferior and unworthy help from horoscopes, when you can seek Him who owns all the heavenly bodies?

*Rev Charles Seet
Life BP Church, Singapore*

In Green Pastures Devotional Readings for Every Day of the Year By J.R. Miller, D.D. 27 August 2006 MORNING

MARK 4:14 "The sower soweth the word."

WHAT comes of all the sermons? The parable of the Sower helps us to answer. Only on one kind of soil did the seed sown come to anything, while that sown on three other kinds of ground failed to produce any harvest.

It is the same with the good seed of God's Word.

Some of it never gets into the heart at all. Birds pick it off as soon as it falls. Some of it starts well enough, but has not root sufficient to hold it amid temptation or persecution. Some of the good seed gets a deep rooting, and would yield a fine harvest, preoccupying it, so that the wheat is choked out.

Love of money, love of pleasure, the frets of life, and other things, crowd out the growing grain, so that none of it can ever come to ripeness.

We should seek to be good soil, that the word sown in our hearts may grow and yield fruits of righteousness. The words of God are heavenly seeds, and where they grow, plants from heaven's gardens are produced.

EVENING

THE ONE PERFECT LIFE

WHERE do we find the truest, noblest life? There is no smallest fragment of our humanity that retains the absolute perfection and beauty that were in human life as it came first from the Creator's hand. If we would see life in its wholeness, unmarred, undebased—the highest, purest, truest life—we must look inside heaven. We are to become like Christ. We should never, therefore, lose sight of Him. Keeping the ideal always before our eyes will, unconsciously yet powerfully, draw us toward it.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: STRIVING TO LIVE ABOVE OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS
IN CHRIST (Ephesians 1:3)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 27/08/2006	Next Week: 03/09/2006	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We also welcome Tsz Ching Chan, Tomas Chittock and Simon Chan to our worship service last week.
<i>Chairman:</i>	John Poh	Alvin Chow	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Rev Lim Chee Boon	Rev Lim Chee Boon	
<i>Message:</i>	Christ's Promises the Comforter	Christ, the True Vine	
<i>Text:</i>	John 14:15-31	John 15:1-17	
<i>Organist:</i>	Yanning	Anthony	<p style="text-align: center;">NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellowship Lunch: There will be a fellowship lunch tomorrow in the church premises. All are welcome. Please inform Rev Lim if you are interested to join in. • Pray for those who are sick: Continue to pray for Rev Lim that he will receive the TIA check-up results as soon as possible. • Pray for journey mercies: For members and friends travelling during the bank holiday weekend. Also, pray for Mok and Carol who will be travelling back to UK on 31 Aug. • Maasai Mission: Continue to pray for the settlement of the land issues. Pray for Sis Pui Meng – for God's protection and blessing in her clinic ministry to the Maasai. • Areas of Service: For those who are interested to serve (as ushers, Sunday school teachers, pianists, organists, kitchen, ...), please see Jonathan or Daniel. • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with hearts prepared. <p style="text-align: center;">*****</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Hold Thou my hand, that when I reach the margin</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Of that lone river Thou didst cross for me,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A heavenly light may flash along its waters,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>And every wave like crystal bright shall be.</i></p>
Evening			
<i>Chairman:</i>	Seetoh Yoong Chiang	Lim Ming Yann	
<i>Speaker:</i>	Rev Lim Chee Boon	Rev Lim Chee Boon	
<i>Message:</i>	The Special People	The Spiritually Blind	
<i>Text:</i>	Titus 2:11-15	John 9:35-41	
<i>Pianist:</i>	Anthony	Yanning	
Other Duties			
	Today	Next Week	
<i>Ushers</i>	Yoong Chiang/Jonathan	Daniel/Mok	
<i>Sunday Sch:</i>	Joyce	Yanning	
<i>Lunch:</i>	Maureen Poh	Yoong Chiang/Jonathan	
<i>Washing-up:</i>	Yetta/Prema	YAF Group 1	
<i>Bible Study:</i>	DHW – Genesis 27	DHW – Genesis 27	
Appointments of the Week			
Wed 30 Aug	7:30 pm	Mid Week Prayer Meeting: C'man: Rev Lim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lord's Supper: Next week, we will be observing the Lord's Supper. Please come with hearts prepared.
Fri 1 Sep	7.00 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: Led by Rev Lim (Book of Daniel)	
Sat 2 Sep	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr/C'man: John	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
	Offering: £171.60	Lunch: £35.10	
	YAF: £45.36		
<h2 style="margin: 0;"><u>The Lord's Prayer</u></h2> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen</i></p>			