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PSYCHICS, ASTROLOGY, HOROSCOPE, PALM READING, TAROT CARDS, FORTUNE-TELLERS, CHANNELING, OUIJA BOARD, MEDIUMS, and SEANCE

What do all the above have in common? People have resorted to all these things in their search for comfort and truth. Those who turn to these things are seeking information, usually about their own futures. Sometimes they try to find out information they believe will only be known by the deceased. In all cases this falls outside the realms of science into the area of the supernatural and reminds me of a quote I heard that came from Ralph Abernathy "**I know not what the future holds but I know Who holds the future.**" Ironically, the people who turn to all forms of astrology are trying to discover knowledge about the future. These same people will one day answer to the One who does indeed control the future — GOD. Some people are under the impression that things such as astrology are scientific and even condoned in the Bible. For this study I will cover the following areas.

- * Is astrology scientific?
- * Are astrology and psychic phenomena condoned in the Bible?
- * If astrology, psychics and other such practices are not scientific, why do people turn to them?
- * Does the Bible condemn astrology, psychics, horoscopes, palm reading, tarot cards, fortune-tellers, channeling, Ouija boards, mediums, séances and other such practices? (And if so, why?)
- * Even if the Bible does condemn these things, why should that bother us?

Is astrology scientific?

The claims of astrology being rooted in science have drawn criticism from scientists throughout the world. U.S. News & World Report had an interesting article about this on May 24th, 1976. Concerning astrology, the article states that "...scientists scoff at such beliefs." The article goes on to say: "A group of 186 eminent U.S. scientists recently published a lengthy statement saying that there is no scientific evidence to support [astrology]. The statement was written by Prof. Bart Bok, formerly president of the American Astronomical Society and professor emeritus of astronomy at the University of Arizona. It appeared in the Humanist, published by the American Humanist Association, and 18 Nobel Prize winners were among those who signed the statement."

This same article gives us an example of a prediction based on astrology. "A few weeks before the first orbiting of the moon by the Apollo 8 crew, the Federation of British Astrologers made this prophecy — 'The probability of serious personality changes among the three astronauts during this voyage is very high. Jupiter and Uranus are in conjunction for the first time in 14 years, and the influences of these planets are very strong.' Space officials ignored the warning. The mission was a success." The conclusion of these scientists was as follows. "The whole system of astrology is self-destructive. Imagine if every decision of your life was made by the flip of a coin. That's how much chance you have of making the right decision by using astrology."

Considering that astrology has no scientific basis and has proven unreliable, isn't it more logical to make decisions by using common sense and reasoning?

1. Are astrology and psychic phenomena condoned in the Bible?

I am familiar with two examples that try to support these practices with the Bible.

The wise men who followed a star to find the child Jesus: the claim is that following a star to a person is practicing astrology.

Some have claimed that Daniel used psychic powers to know what King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed in Daniel, Chapter 2.

In answer to 1): the word "Magi", as we find in Chapter 2 of Matthew, is also translated "wise men". This term can be attributed to an astrologer. This is not to say that all "wise men" practiced astrology. Many people have tried to make an educated guess as to exactly who these men were. But it remains just that — an educated guess; nobody really knows for sure. Still the fact is the Bible does condemn astrology and the context of this passage neither condones nor condemns astrology. This also does not seem to be an ordinary star. When we study this passage in Matthew we find:

The star moved so the Magi could follow it.

The star came to a stop and was able to indicate the exact place where Jesus and His parents were staying.

The star apparently was lost from sight for a period of time and then became visible again.

We do not know these wise men's past history. We do know that they came to find the King of the Jews so they could worship Him. This would seem unlikely for an astrologer, considering God condemns astrology.

The fact that the men expected a star to lead them to the King of the Jews seems to imply that the Magi interpreted Numbers 24:17 as a sign to find Him. Why else would they expect a star to lead them to the King of the Jews? If they were aware of this passage in the Old Testament, it is likely they also knew the Old Testament condemned the practice of astrology. How could an astrologer study a star that was not there beforehand? We are told the star "Appeared" (Matthew 2: 7-10). The evidence shows this was not a usual star observation, but rather the hand of God to direct the Magi to Jesus. This temporary phenomenon seems to have no other purpose than the one stated. It certainly had no astrological meaning.

If one were to attach a meaning to this event, the meaning would have to be to worship Jesus. That is precisely what the Magi did

2. Did Daniel use psychic powers?

In answer to 2): To show this is not true is simply a matter of examining the context. The historical event described in this chapter is noteworthy. King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that greatly disturbed him. He called in the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, the Chaldeans (wise men) and so forth. He told them that they must not only interpret the dream but that they must also tell him what he dreamed. If they did not do as he asked, he would have them killed. Daniel was the only one who was able to tell the king what he dreamed, as well as the interpretation. However, Daniel himself does not take the credit for this accomplishment. We find in verse 18 of Daniel 2 that Daniel sought the Lord for the answer to the mystery. Verse 22 shows it was only God who could reveal the mystery of the dream to Daniel. In verses 27-28, Daniel specifically says to the king that "neither wise men, conjurers, magicians, nor diviners are able to declare it to the king. However, there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar what will take place in the latter days." We know that Daniel not only told the king what he dreamed but that he also gave the correct interpretation of that dream. Some of the events described here coincide with end time prophecies that we find in the book of Revelation. It can be shown that history has followed, and still is following, Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream given to him by the Lord. The difference between what Daniel did and what a psychic does is a matter of whom is sought for the answer. Daniel sought the Lord; psychics do not. There are those who claim they get their information from the Lord and tell events of the future. The Bible tells us that if they are not 100% correct all the time, their messages are not from God (Deuteronomy 18:18-22).

If astrology, psychics and other such practices are not scientific, why do people turn to them?

I suppose the truth is because sometimes it works. There are those who accurately predict future events. Unlike God and His prophets in the Bible, though, they are not right all the time. If a person talks to a psychic or astrologer and they are told some piece of information that comes true, the person can easily get caught up in going back for more information. When the information is correct, it can be kind of exciting. We have an example in the New Testament of a girl who made a profit by fortune-telling. She was correct in her message recorded in the book of Acts.

Acts 16:16-19: "And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.' And she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities."

I would like you to take note of a couple of things that we can glean from this passage.

It is possible for a fortune-teller to have insight into something that is indeed truth. The girl's knowledge of this and future events did not come from God. Her master's even recognized that they would gain no more profit from her after the spirit was cast out. This is not an isolated incident where a spirit that was not from God recognized a truth. For example, in Matthew Chapter 8, demons that were possessing two men declared Jesus to be the Son of God.

The power from God is stronger than that from an evil spirit. Paul was able to command this spirit in the name of Jesus to depart from the girl.

Does the Bible condemn astrology, psychics, horoscopes, palm reading, tarotcards, fortune-tellers, channeling, Ouija board, mediums, séances, and other such practices? (And if so, why?)

There are many ways people try to find out about the future and other unknown events. What they all have in common is that none of them are rooted in science. None of them are seeking God for the answer — which is ironic, because He does know everything, and God is never wrong. Let's look to the Bible to see what it says about these things.

Exodus 22:18: "You shall not allow a sorceress to live."

Leviticus 19:31: "Do not turn to mediums or spiritists; do not seek them out to be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 20:6: “As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists, to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.”

Leviticus 20:27: “Now a man or a woman who is a medium or a spiritist shall surely be put to death. They shall be stoned with stones, their bloodguiltiness is upon them.”

Deuteronomy 18:9-15: "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. You shall be blameless before the LORD your God. For those nations, which you shall dispossess, listen to those who practice witchcraft and to diviners, but as for you, the LORD your God has not allowed you to do so. The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him.

1 Samuel 15:23: “For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king.” (Saul was told here that rebellion, the same as divination, was a sin. Because he did not obey the Lord he was rejected as king.)

1 Chronicles 10:13-14: “So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against the LORD, because of the word of the LORD which he did not keep; and also because he asked counsel of a medium, making inquiry of it and did not inquire of the LORD. Therefore He killed him, and turned the kingdom to David the son of Jesse.”

2 Chronicles 33:6: “And he made his sons pass through the fire in the valley of Ben-hinnom; and he practiced witchcraft, used divination, practiced sorcery, and dealt with mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger.”

Isaiah 8:19: “And when they say to you, ‘Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter,’ should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?”

Isaiah 44:24-25: “Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, ‘I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself, and spreading out the earth all alone, Causing the omens of boasters to fail, making fools out of diviners, causing wise men to draw back, and turning their knowledge into foolishness,’”

Isaiah 47:12-14: "Stand fast now in your spells and in your many sorceries with which you have labored from your youth; perhaps you will be able to profit, perhaps you may cause trembling. 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; there will be no coal to warm by, nor a fire to sit before!"

Jeremiah 14:14: "Then the LORD said to me, 'The prophets are prophesying falsehood in My name. I have neither sent them nor commanded them nor spoken to them; they are prophesying to you a false vision, divination, futility and the deception of their own minds.'"

Jeremiah 29:8-9: "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Do not let your prophets who are in your midst and your diviners deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams which they dream. For they prophesy falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them,' declares the LORD."

Ezekiel 13:6-9: "They see falsehood and lying divination who are saying, 'The LORD declares,' when the LORD has not sent them; yet they hope for the fulfillment of their word. Did you not see a false vision and speak a lying divination when you said, 'The LORD declares,' but it is not I who have spoken? Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD, 'Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you,' declares the Lord GOD. 'So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am the Lord GOD.'"

Zechariah 10:2: "For the teraphim speak iniquity, and the diviners see lying visions, and tell false dreams; they comfort in vain. Therefore the people wander like sheep, they are afflicted, because there is no shepherd."

Malachi 3:5: "Then I will draw near to you for judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers and against the adulterers and against those who swear falsely, and against those who oppress the wage earner in his wages, the widow and the orphan, and those who turn aside the alien, and do not fear Me,' says the LORD of hosts."

Matthew 24:24: "For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. The Greek word here that was translated "false prophets" in our English Bible is defined by Strong's as "a spurious prophet, i.e., pretended foreteller or religious imposter."

Acts 19: 17-20: “And this became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus, and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified. Many also of those who had believed kept coming, confessing and disclosing their practices. And many of those who practiced magic brought their books together and began burning them in the sight of all, and they counted up the price of them and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing.”

As you can see in Scripture God is definitely against such practices. Reasons why God is against these practices can be seen in the Scripture you just read.

- * The people should consult God (Isaiah 8:19).
- * They are prophesying lies and deception of their own minds (Jeremiah 14:14).
- * They are deceiving and misleading people (Jeremiah 29:8-9, Ezekiel 13:6-9, Matthew 24:24).
- * Because of them the people are afflicted and wander like sheep (Zechariah 10:2).

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary sums astrology in the following manner: "The Bible's contempt for astrology is most clearly seen in its prohibition of any technique to aid in predicting the future. Astrology assumes that God does not control history. It assumes that history is governed by the affairs of the pagan gods as revealed in the movement of the planets. The believer knows that a sovereign God rules this world. He also knows that resorting to astrology is a denial of the life of faith by which one trusts God and not his lucky stars for the future."

Even if the Bible does condemn these things why should that bother us?

These practices should bother the Christian a lot. God speaks strongly against these things, and He disciplines those whom He loves (Hebrews 12:6). Also, the Christian should consider what Jesus said in Luke 6:46: "And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

As far as the non-Christian, all I can say is that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm 111:10). Apart from Jesus Christ a person goes to Hell. Even one sin in your whole life will keep you out of Heaven, without acceptance of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice. I suppose if you want to follow astrology and other such things rather than God, you can. If you are already rejecting Jesus Christ, what difference does it make if you are involved in these things? Apart from Jesus you will be spending eternity in Hell anyway. I believe it would be much wiser though to repent and turn to the Lord.