



STATEMENT DA402

What Your Horoscope Doesn't Tell You **by Charles Strohmer (Tyndale House Publishers, 1988)**

Last spring, after former White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan publicly revealed the longtime reliance of President and Nancy Reagan on astrology, the focus of the national media turned to this popular occult art. On ABC's "Nightline" Ted Koppel moderated a debate between a professional astrologer and a skeptical scientist. As usual, neither side could make a single point with the opposition. An impassible gulf seemingly separates the believers and unbelievers in astrology.

Why is this? I have concluded that it is because both sides are reinforced by disparate elements of truth. The skeptics' case against astrology's claim to be scientific is irrefutable. But the believers are not as irrational as the skeptics think — astrology often "works." It may not work with the precision necessary to satisfy science, but in a personal context an astrologer's accuracy can be impressive enough to satisfy even a critically-minded person that *something* more than mere coincidence is involved.

Although a few Christian books have been written wholly or partly to answer astrology, none to my knowledge has addressed this crucial factor in astrology's longstanding popularity — until now. In *What Your Horoscope Doesn't Tell You*, former astrologer Charles Strohmer devotes three chapters to evaluating this phenomenon.

Based on his personal experience and subsequent research, Strohmer proposes an explanation which has nothing to do with the astrologer's horoscopic charts: "Adherents of this system — without knowing it — are banging on the door through which communication is established with knowledgeable yet deceptive spirit beings. Eventually that door opens. And that opening produces an appalling development in the adherent's life. He or she matures in the craft in a most unthought-of manner: as a spirit medium' (p.51).

What Your Horoscope Doesn't Tell You is a good book to give to acquaintances attracted to astrology. It is written directly to them, in eminently readable language that is free of Christian jargon and unencumbered by undefined technical terms.

Chapter by chapter, Strohmer builds his case against astrology. For instance, he argues that a central test of a belief system is whether it is able to provide "authentic answers" to life's "big questions". How can astrology's answers be authentic when it is based on myth and deception (i.e., it falsely claims that the planets exert specific influences on our lives, when historically it is really Greek and Roman gods such as Jupiter, Mars, and Venus who exert such influences)? In the concluding chapters the author favorably applies the same test to the gospel.

The book is not without its flaws. For example: in arguing that the only possible explanation for why astrology "works" is evil spirits, Strohmer overlooks the explanation that most occultists would choose once astrology itself was proven spurious — "psi," or psychic ability.

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In spite of such weaknesses, *What Your Horoscope Doesn't Tell You* lucidly sets forth the case against astrology while making an original contribution to Christian thought on the subject.

— *Elliot Miller*

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