

WHAT IS YOUR ZODIAC?

Fr. Alexander

Countless people who are unable to name a book of the Bible are fully conversant with the signs of the zodiac and can say what type of person one is, merely by knowing one's date of birth. For example, those that are born under the sign of Aquarius are presumed to be endowed with insight and may even be geniuses.

Newspapers and magazines dedicate a special column to the zodiac, announcing what is in store for each person, what is auspicious for the day, for the week or the month, and readers rush to find out. Even in Orthodox circles, one can find those who know the signs of the zodiac and are eager to let us know where we fit in. They need only the date of birth.

There are, of course, educated people who argue that they do not really consider the zodiac a source of truth but only of interest, a kind of innocent entertainment, no different from foretelling the future by tea leaves or by "reading the coffee cup." They will admit to having given a silver coin to a fortune teller, from time to time, to find out what the future holds for them.

The Orthodox Church categorically rejects such practices as a form of paganism. They amount to a denial of Orthodox doctrine, for the following reason. Orthodoxy teaches that God endowed man with the freedom of choice. Each person decides whether to do right or wrong; it is his own choice and no one else's. The person that believes that our acts are already written in the heavenly bodies, in the rotations of the sun, of the moon, or of the stars, that person is not Orthodox.

This is also a matter of basic reason. None of us likes to be robbed; but if acts of robbery happen because they are written in the heavens, why do we punish robbers and murderers? What can they do to change the heavens? It is a matter of logic, also because there seems to be no reason for determining the future by one's birth. Why not by some other event – baptism, first look at the sunset, engagement, marriage, or first visit to the dentist?

Likewise, if the signs of the zodiac are understood, why doesn't the country adopt them as a guideline? In other words, if those born under Aquarius have deep insights and grow to be geniuses, why not encourage all newly married to have babies born under that sign?

In order to believe that any act is determined by the stars and the planets, one must give up the idea of personal responsibility in sin, delete the need for repentance, pronounce forgiveness unnecessary, dismiss confession, and reject the reasons for which Christ died on the cross. No one can have an interest in the zodiac (or in any of the parallel activities) and, at the same time, claim to be an Orthodox Christian.