



Media Spotlight

A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR MEDIA

SPECIAL REPORT

THE GOSPEL IN THE ZODIAC

A BIBLICAL ANALYSIS

By Albert James Dager

As time draws to a close man's search for life's meaning is taking him on a frenzied foray into ancient wisdom and occult philosophy. It's as if he senses an innate truth which he thinks can only be discovered by going back to his origins—as if with the passing of the centuries he has lost touch with eternal truths essential to his spiritual life and happiness.

Perhaps that's why many of today's Christians feel a need to prove the veracity of the Gospel by some means outside God's Word. Many attempt to glean diamonds of hidden truth from the gravel pit of occult theory. An example of this penchant for rushing in where angels fear to tread is the theory that I call "The Gospel in the Zodiac."

This theory is based on the tenuous assumption that the Zodiac was originally designed by God as a witness of His plan of redemption, and was later corrupted by occult science into an instrument of divination (the predicting of the future and/or the determining of personality traits based on the positions of the heavenly bodies).

The Gospel-in-the-Zodiac theory is nothing new; it is a century-old "wind of doctrine" which seems to be enjoying new popularity among many of today's Christians. It may seem harmless enough, but every theory that touches upon God's plan of redemption carries with it the possibility of leading souls into spiritual error. The more fantastic the theory the stronger the danger—and, unfortunately, the more likely it is to be followed.

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There are several recent books which, to those unfamiliar with the antiquity of the "Gospel in the Zodiac" theory, seem to offer original insight into a new, and fascinating subject. Some lack any semblance of documentation as to the origins of the theory. This has resulted in many readers assuming



astrology blended with original thinking and a special revelation from God. In truth, their claims are over a century old, the earliest traceable work being that of a Miss Florence Rolleston, of Keswick, England. Her study of the ancient names of over a hundred principal stars led to the publishing in 1863 of her findings in the form of notes under the title, *Mazzaroth: or, the Constellations*.

The ancient names of those stars—names such as Prince, He Shall Be Exalted, The Redeemer, He Who Comes to Suffer, and the like—seem to indicate that God gave them their names. Although many of the names are not quite so easy to place in the "Gospel" category, it would be only reasonable to assume that God did name the stars. After all, He created them. But there is a difference between the stars and the constellations of the Zodiac.

Rolleston's concept gained wider popularity with the release in 1884 of Joseph A. Seiss's book, *The Gospel in the Stars*. Almost a decade later, in 1893, Ethelbert (E.W.) Bullinger sought to popularize the theory further with his book, *The Witness of the Stars*, which is still available in a 1967 edition published by Kregel Publications based in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Bullinger, a 19th-century Anglican clergyman and descendant of Swiss Reformer J. Heinrich Bullinger, did give credit to Miss Rolleston for her labors in providing him with ancient astronomical facts and the names and signification of those hundred or more principal stars. But he also clearly stated, "...for their interpretation I am alone responsible."¹

It was from learning the names of those some one hundred principal stars that Seiss and Bullinger drew the conclusion that the Zodiac was also an invention of God. Yet because some one hundred out of over ten thousand stars visible to the naked eye possess names that seem to relate to the Redemption is hardly reason to suppose that the Zodiac is also God's invention. The individual stars are not necessarily related to the concept of constellations.

that the authors discovered this "truth" themselves—independently of others—through diligent study of the Scriptures and certain ancient records pertaining to the names of the stars and constellations.

At best, some contain a cursory reference to and a bibliography of the earlier works of others; some don't even contain a bibliography. This could easily lead the reader to assume that the author has a unique understanding of astronomy and

