

*astrological-cultural-spiritual-political
views & commentary...*

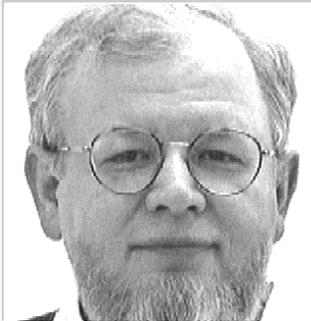
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THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



Thoughts, dates, & reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness...

website www.billherbst.com
email bill@billherbst.com
voicemail 612.207.4486



Dear friends,

This month's newsletter contains the first installment of a longer essay on the astrological chart of George W. Bush. Given that our country is waging the most controversial and potentially dangerous war since Vietnam, with public opinion bitterly divided both at home and around the world, the time seems ripe for me to write seriously about America's President from an astrological perspective.

I've tried to present a fair and balanced astrological view in this essay. "Objective" or "impartial" astrological interpretations don't really exist, but I've put aside as best I can my personal opinions in this piece, so as to give readers a more dependable, professional astrological base from which to draw their own conclusions.

GEORGE W. BUSH — AN ASTROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

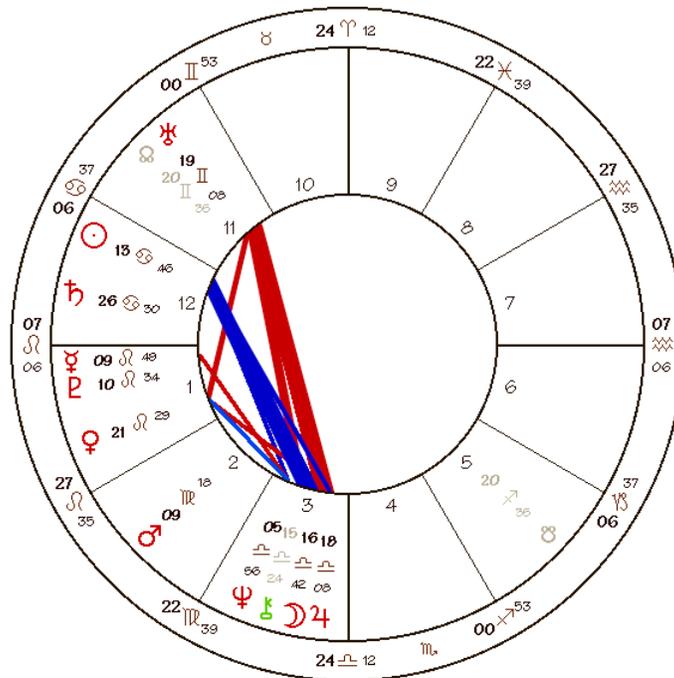
In the astrology of an individual life, three astronomical bodies form the core of significance: the Sun, Moon, and Saturn. Other bodies in the solar system vary in importance, depending on their position in a given chart, but the Sun, Moon, and Saturn are at the top of the list in every chart, such potent symbols that they are called "power points." The primary focus of this essay is on two of those bodies in George W. Bush's chart: the Sun and Saturn.

The Sun is the central symbol in astrology. It represents the core of the life, the basic inner filters through which reality is experienced and understood. In a poetic way, the Sun is our direct link back to Cosmic Central, our personal hot line to ultimate meanings. It is the source, indicating how power and dignity will be felt within the self. The Sun's position in the chart (by sign, house, and relationship with other planets and points of significance) reveals our life-purpose, the magnetic center around which everything else must cohere for meaning to be preserved.

If the Sun represents the inner definition of self, the core of personality, the source of power and meaning, then Saturn is the outer definition, the limits within which the personality must operate. Saturn represents the influence of the father and all external authorities. It shows the path of slow, gradual maturation through restraint, duty, and delay. Saturn symbolizes worldly ambitions and the obstacles we must overcome to succeed. Here is where we look for the mountains that must be climbed, with all the daunting fears and humbling failures that accompany such challenges.

In George W. Bush's chart, both symbols are in the same sign (Cancer) *and* the same house (12th), which is quite rare, occurring in only a tiny percentage of the population (less than 5%). This is a provocative and paradoxical placement, for it reveals that Bush's core strengths are identical to his limiting weaknesses. The same attitudes and experiences that connect George W. to his sources of power and meaning simultaneously activate his achilles' heel of misunderstanding, frustration, and denial—and vice versa. Success and failure intertwine in Bush's life in mysterious fashion. Though early defeats dog his heels, later victories emerge that confound opponents who underestimate his resiliency. Conversely, even his greatest apparent successes may be undone from within by unseen repercussions.

Lacking the contrasts between confidence and vulnerability that provide most of us with built-in perspective, Bush operates differently. His inner doubts make him slower to come to certainty about what he should do, but when he finally decides to act, his doubts vanish, allowing a unified inner resolve that is unresponsive to (and, indeed, unconcerned with) any external criticisms. This is both a blessing and a curse.



George W. Bush
 6 July 1946, 7:26 a.m. EDT
 New Haven, CT 41n18, 72w56

Cancer—Family and Security

In the zodiac, Cancer is the sign of emotional roots, the lineage of one's family of origin and its continuation in the adult family, where protection of personal security is paramount. Astrologically, George W. Bush's entire life has been shaped by his family and background. This is true to some extent for all of us, since it's a basic human quality, but it's emphatically true for Bush. To assert that he would not now be President had not his father been President before him is no exaggeration. Both the Sun and Saturn in Cancer suggest that George W. is carrying on in his father's footsteps, even to the point of trying to take care of what he sees as his father's unfinished business. Those critics who suggest that Bush is obsessed with Iraq because of Saddam Hussein's foiled plot to kill his father are no doubt engaging in derisive hyperbole, but Bush's chart does support the psychological underpinnings of a general "like father, like son" theory as a subtle, if unconscious motive.

Cancer is a conservative sign that sees the future as a continuation of the past. Emphasis on "roots" implies not only family-of-origin, but also home—at whatever level home may be felt. The phrase "Homeland Security," which has acquired ominous meanings since the attacks on New York and Washington and is now a Bush-created government agency, is very much a product of Bush's most basic orientations. He believes devoutly in America and its mythology, and he is devoted to its protection with a fervor that is part evangelical, part "good father," and part cowboy sheriff.

The official U.S. Government Presidential website describes Bush this way: "...President Bush has earned a reputation as a compassionate conservative who shapes policy based on the principles of limited government, personal responsibility, strong families and local control." That description, written by the White House staff, might as well be from an astrology textbook, given its direct references to Cancerian traits.

The 12th House—Faith and Selflessness

What complicates Bush's chart is the position of both the Sun and Saturn in the 12th house. The 12th is arguably the most complex and difficult of all twelve houses. Its meanings include:

- *surrender of the ego (purification through self-denial or self-sacrifice, often to serve others)*
- *hidden or behind-the-scenes matters (including a pronounced tendency toward secrecy)*
- *mental or emotional illness (involving delusion or misunderstanding)*
- *drugs and altered consciousness (as transcendence or escape)*
- *metaphysical interests (including mythologies of sainthood and martyrdom)*
- *preference for mythic rather than literal realities (including dreams and fantasies)*
- *need for periodic isolation or withdrawal from public life*
- *being caught up in or swept away by something larger than oneself*

In surrendering the ego, the 12th house can indicate either heaven or hell—the heaven of spiritual transcendence into an intuitive realm of pure openness and receptivity, or the hell of personality disintegration into chaos, trauma, and/or delusion. The extremes of enlightenment and madness are found in this house, and the possibility of losing oneself to either extreme is ever-present.

People with emphasized 12th houses in their charts often have very strong interests in spirituality or metaphysics. Sometimes they lean toward immersion into bureaucratic or institutional service of a more humble nature. They may undergo either voluntary isolation or forced imprisonment. The 12th house can inspire or terrify, enlighten or confuse, purify or poison. This is definitely not an area of ordinary life. Instead, it embraces profound and contradictory extremes, where fantasy overshadows reality, and where mythological quests trump pragmatic concerns.

So with the Sun and Saturn in both Cancer and the 12th house, one thing that is astrologically obvious about George W. Bush is that he believes what he says. He may be, as the White House asserts, in possession of "secret" information about threats to our security that justify the necessity of war with Iraq, or conversely he may be a victim of the hawkish, neo-conservative ideology of inner-circle members of his Cabinet and the Department of Defense. Either way, his chart makes it clear that his personal stance is utterly sincere. He trusts what he's told by his closest advisors, and he believes what he says.

Bush is not a natural leader, *unless* he feels "chosen" by life or by destiny. Then his Leo Ascendant kicks in and he assumes the mythic role of leadership. Even in this, however, he feels humble and selfless. Astrologically, he believes in doing the work fate gives him, and acting as a channel. In other words, he receives his marching orders from sources above himself—sources that are largely intangible and mysterious. Before 9-11, Bush would have seen himself largely as an administrator. After 9-11, he was galvanized to take charge of a mission that can be described astrologically as evangelical, an act of faith.

One problem for us—as ordinary Americans—is that the Bush administration's methods of operating reflect the 12th house meaning of secrecy. Keep in mind that his father was Director of the CIA under Ford and Carter. The legacy of secrets hidden from public view is woven into the very fabric of George W.'s life; even his election as President in 2000 was shrouded in confusion. The bottom line is that we in the public have no way of telling whether the President is accurately informed or tragically deluded. Is he truly protecting the security of our nation, or is he caught up in a tidal wave of paranoia and religious fervor? Judging only from his chart, either is possible.

America has had other Presidents with 12th house Suns—notably Abraham Lincoln and Jimmy Carter. Lincoln's election brought on the Civil War, and his tenure as President was an agonizing ordeal for him. He even dreamed precognitively of his own assassination, which was a martyrdom that came true. Carter's administration began with a sense of spiritual renewal but was undone by the Iran hostage crisis. Carter has since become an elder statesman who works tirelessly for international human rights and the underprivileged. Neither of these Presidents completed a second term, and both continued to resonate with

the 12th-house meanings of their life-purposes.

George W. Bush's fate as President remains to be seen (*I will discuss those possibilities in the next installment of this essay*).

Chiron—the Wound that Will Not Heal

In astrology, Chiron is the symbol for the wounded healer. In our charts, it shows where we are wounded in a way that often proves difficult to heal, but which motivates us to understand the depths of suffering so we can help others. Bush's birth chart emphasizes Chiron's position in the 3rd house by its strong connection to both his Sun and Moon.

Given that the Sun and Moon represent, respectively, the father and mother, Chiron's linkage to both these planets in Bush's chart indicates that his "unhealed wound" grew out of his relationship with both parents, most closely that with his mother.

One 3rd house meaning is verbal communication, where Bush is clearly wounded. Another is siblings—one's brother and sisters. When George W. was seven years old, his three-year-old sister Robin died of leukemia. Biographies of the President have highlighted this tragedy as the seminal event of Bush's childhood. His sister's death catapulted his entire family into deep grief. Bush himself has said that the event bonded him to his mother in a way that changed his life and shaped his entire future.

This is classic textbook astrology. George W.'s active cycles (called 'transits') for that year, 1953, are profound in their significance and intensity: Uranus square his natal Moon and conjunct his Sun, both Saturn and Neptune square his natal Saturn and conjunct his Lower Heaven, and Pluto conjoining his natal Venus. It would take thousands of words for me to explain these transits to readers who know little or no astrology, but suffice it to say that they are overwhelming in their shock, confusion, and intensity, and critical in their significance. For an astrologer, 1953 is a year of unparalleled and crucial meaning in George W. Bush's development. Considered astrologically, he would have been a confused and dazed child, still unaware of himself, but almost angelic in how deeply his heart opened to his parents' suffering. Any compassion Bush feels for the pain of others still resonates from the radioactive core of that event in his life, and all his sympathies are focused on the emotional bonds of family.

Though Bush's "karmic burden" surrounds his relationship to his father (who would be considered "missing" or "absent" astrologically), his birth chart is very maternally-oriented. Barbara Bush is clearly the inner-link parent, and W.'s personality reflects this—he is much more like his mother than his father in his self-expression and his style of relating to others. Later in his life, his wife Laura would take over that intimate role of support and influence, typical for a Cancerian male. Bush's father, on the other hand, represents a mythic figure in his life. Rather than having a direct and immediate effect, his father would be a more distant influence, always somehow beyond reach, but larger-than-life.

The Saturn-Sun Cycle

Saturn and the Sun have a natural relationship in astrology. The unfolding of the life-purpose does not begin until Saturn, which takes 29 years to travel around the zodiac, passes over the position occupied by the Sun at our birth. Somewhere between physical birth and age 29, each of us takes on the responsibility for expressing his or her life-purpose. The event marks the beginning of serious self-development, in a sense representing the end of childhood.

When the Saturn-Sun cycle kicks off early in life, we are precocious, which makes us immediately much older than our years. George W. Bush, however, was a late-bloomer; Saturn did not pass his Sun and activate his life-purpose cycle until he was 28 years old. So, once again, astrology dovetails with what we know from the public record.

George W. matured late—his collegiate antics and generally lackluster 20s are very much in line with his chart. His privileged family background, confirmed astrologically by Jupiter near the Lower Heaven as the trailing planet that anchors his eastern hemisphere bowl pattern, took him from Andover prep to Yale undergrad to Harvard Business School, but nowhere did he shine academically. Astrologically, it comes as no surprise given his 12th-house Sun and Saturn, Leo rising, and 11th-house Uranus that George W. was known as a social partier who was inordinately fond of alcohol, barely masking a serious and long-term

drinking problem.

Bush's Saturn-Sun cycle finally birthed itself between August of 1974 and April of 1975. At that point, and right on schedule astrologically, he moved to Midland, Texas, and began his career in the oil business, which again echoed his father's footsteps. That year—1975—represents the line of demarcation between George W. Bush the overgrown adolescent and George W. Bush the struggling adult.

Since his initial ambition cycle had already peaked six years earlier and was headed rapidly downhill at that point, with Saturn moving for the first time into the 12th house, the pointed lack of success of his career in the oil business comes as no surprise. The chart as a whole is not business-savvy. Hard work is indicated (Mars unaspected in Virgo in the 2nd house, ruling the 10th) but Bush's efforts are often waylaid by unfortunate timing and circumstances beyond his personal control (Saturn in the 12th).

Much has been made of W.'s various business failures. Some in the press and public are frankly astonished that a man with such dubious business acumen could have risen to be the governor of Texas, much less President of the United States. Astrologically, however, this is a non-issue, a moot point; George W.'s life never was and never will be about success in business.

The failures of his 30s are insignificant astrologically when compared to the life-changing decision Bush made when he turned 40. In that year—1986—George W. stopped drinking. In itself, this decision is meaningful, in that 12th-house types have a basic attraction to the lure of drugs and an addictive vulnerability to the escape they (seemingly) provide from the duties and drudgery of everyday life. But what has greater import and is more profoundly revealing from the standpoint of astrology is the reason behind Bush's decision to kick the habit and get the monkey off his back—namely, that he “found God” and was “born again.”

Astrology suggests that change occurs most often as substitution—where one behavior pattern or feeling orientation is replaced by another related or symbolically similar pattern. For instance, the 6th house is the area of disciplined habits toward self-perfection, but also breakdowns into physical illness or disease. Both experiences are tied to the same house, but one tends to counteract the other in a shift of levels: The suffering of illness may sap our strength and undo our disciplines, but renewed discipline may later foster recovery from illness and restoration of our health. Over an entire life, this dance may reverse many times.

Bush's 12th house reveals a life-purpose shaped by the longing for immersion of the self through surrender into something larger than the ego. One manifestation of that is in the altered consciousness of drug use. Another is in the yearning for transcendent spirituality. “Sobriety” is not really an option for 12th-house types—in a very real way, they need to be “high” on something. So Bush replaced one high with another. As his spirituality was renewed and took root again in his life, it not only filled the need that was being served by alcohol, it forced out and replaced the drug habit. In Bush's case, surrender to Christ won out over surrender to alcohol.



Next month: Part Two of this essay will discuss the very different meanings of 9-11 and the War in Iraq for George W. Bush, in both his personal life and his Presidency.

Bill Herbst resides in Minneapolis, Minnesota. To schedule an astrological session, either in-person locally or long-distance via telephone, send an email to bill@billherbst.com, or call 612-207-4486 and leave a voicemail.

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