

# An Astrological Preview of the 2020s

by Bill Herbst

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In the 2020s, all but one of the civilizational cycles involving Jupiter or Saturn begin again. That's six of the ten cycles restarting over the coming decade. Early in the 2030s, the last of the seven begins (Saturn-Uranus).

Here's the list of major planetary conjunctions that kick off those seven cycles, with their exact dates (by month) and effective gestation periods (using 10° orbs):

<i>Cycle</i>	<i>Zodiacal Position</i>	<i>Exact Month/Year</i>	<i>Effective Period</i>
<b>Saturn-Pluto</b> .....	23° Capricorn .....	Jan 2020.....	Dec 2018 – Jan 2021
<b>Jupiter-Pluto</b> .....	23-25° Capricorn ...	Apr/Jun/Nov 2020 ....	Feb 2020 – Jan 2021
<b>Jupiter-Saturn</b> .....	1° Aquarius .....	Dec 2020 .....	Feb 2020 – Mar 2021
<b>Jupiter-Neptune</b> ....	24° Pisces .....	Apr 2022.....	Feb 2022 – Jan 2023
<b>Jupiter-Uranus</b> .....	22° Taurus .....	Apr 2023.....	Jul 2023 – Jun 2024
<b>Saturn-Neptune</b> .....	1° Aries.....	Feb 2026 .....	Feb 2025 – Mar 2027
<b>Saturn-Uranus</b> .....	29° Gemini.....	Jun 2032.....	Jun 2031 – Jul 2033

All these cycles indicate new beginnings in culture and potentially major changes in society. These changes are mostly not dramatic in their onset, but they are structural and significant as they play out in real-life correspondence. Few decades contain this many cyclic beginnings. So, we can expect to see many changes in society during the upcoming decade. Every decade contains noteworthy events, but they may not always signal new developments in the future direction of civilization. The symbolism of the 2020s demands a reconsideration of many of modern civilization's basic orientations.

## The Three Outermost Cycles

First, however, let's examine the implications for the 2020s of the three cycles shared by the outermost, trans-Saturnian planets: *Uranus-Neptune*, *Uranus-Pluto*, and *Neptune-Pluto*. While none of these three cycles changes phase during the 2020s, they are ongoing in providing a subtext for civilization's current beliefs and attitudes. All three are still relatively young and moving through the waxing half of their cycles. Something profound is building within humanity. It might be amazing, and it could be dangerous, but we're pushing ahead anyway. Certain individuals will no doubt be more aware than others of the implications of our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, but as a species, we seem to have a distinctly limited ability to recognize or predict all the repercussions of our collective actions. We are aggressively tactical, responding to the exigencies of

the moment, but we're not very strategic. China may be playing "the long game" in economics and social planning, but America clearly isn't.

### **Uranus-Neptune**

The current Uranus-Neptune cycle began in 1993 in Capricorn. The symbolism is primarily two-fold. One dimension is about revolutionary dreams involving government and authority (with contradictory impulses toward less government and more freedom, on the one hand, and more world government and reconstituted hierarchies of authority, on the other hand). The other dimension is the potent wish for economic gain through technology. Both dimensions have been in dramatic evidence since the 1990s. The Soviet Union collapsed, and western capitalism took a victory lap. And yet, democratic governments around the world are now under siege by the impulse toward authoritarianism. Similarly, marketplace technology has exploded and transformed not only how we conduct commerce, but our personal day-to-day lives as well.

This Uranus-Neptune cycle is still young and has been transitioning from the New Phase to the Crescent Phase since 2017. During the early 2020s, doubts may arise about the wisdom of rushing to develop technology, but those can be expected to subside from the middle of the decade on as Uranus-Neptune form their waxing sextile. The Singularity isn't likely to occur in the 2020s, but technology will continue to develop, and governments around the world will probably change in unexpected ways, for better or worse.

### **Uranus-Pluto**

The Uranus-Pluto cycle that began in the mid-1960s in Virgo finishes up its waxing square (from Capricorn to Aries) in early 2020. From that point on, it will move through its second quarter (or Summer Phase), which is the most assertive and concrete of the eight phases. All Uranus-Pluto cycles concern revolutionary changes in power. The current cycle includes dramatic shifts in the understanding of systems in science through political uprisings that challenge those who hold the reins of power, as well as extreme pushback from those in authority.

From 2022 through 2031, Uranus will form a waxing trine to Pluto, first from Taurus to Capricorn and later from Gemini to Aquarius. Less turbulent than the waxing square that preceded it (from 2007 through 2020), the transit is likely to represent a consolidation of power that was released earlier in the cycle. Whichever political faction presents the most effective narrative and holds the collective scepter in 2023 will tend to maintain and deepen that power over the remaining years of the decade. Will it be reactionary populists, socialist progressives, centrist pragmatists, or scientists and technocrats? Judging from this cycle alone, we don't yet know and won't for a few more years.

### **Neptune-Pluto**

The current Neptune-Pluto cycle began at the end of the 19th century (from 1883-1900 in Gemini). Thus, the symbolism of the current cycle is primarily about mental stimulation by empowering dreams of information, communication, stimulus, and travel. The cycle is in its Crescent Phase now — only the second of

the eight phases — moving through a very extended waxing sextile aspect between the two bodies (from 1950-2032, with 49 exact passes over that 82 years). Using a 4° orb, the effective period of the sextile is from 1944-2037, almost an entire century. A majority of humans now living have that sextile aspect between Neptune and Pluto in their natal charts, so the symbolic resonance of the cycle is nearly universal in the beliefs and attitudes of collective humanity. The sextile starts out with Pluto in Leo and Neptune in Libra, then continues through Virgo-Scorpio, Libra-Sagittarius, Scorpio-Capricorn, and finally finishes up in Aquarius-Aries.

Basically, the Crescent Phase is about building strength by overcoming inward doubts and laying the foundation to support the more concrete manifestation in the second quarter. The sextile aspect at 60° during the Crescent Phase increases the determination to achieve greater productivity later by building that foundation. If we think that technology is galloping ahead now, we haven't seen anything yet. In the 3,000-year Gemini period of six 500-year Neptune-Pluto cycles, dreams of personal travel, commercial travel, and even space travel are fundamental. As far-fetched as colonizing the Moon or Mars may seem, such dreams are inherent to this period in human evolution. The question isn't whether that can occur — it could — but instead, whether civilization and humanity will survive intact long enough to achieve it.

## **The Social Cycles of Jupiter and Saturn**

Considering the other seven, more active cycles (involving Jupiter or Saturn), the 2020s start with a bang. Jupiter, Saturn, and Pluto are all moving through late Capricorn, and their three shared cycles (Jupiter-Saturn, Jupiter-Pluto, and Saturn-Pluto) begin within the first year of the decade. Those alignments are accompanied in 2020-2021 by the waning squares of the Jupiter-Uranus and Saturn-Uranus cycles. The extreme polarization in culture and politics witnessed increasingly during the 2010s should come to a head in 2020. Something's got to give, and many astrologers believe that economics and finances are ripe for another meltdown. That opinion is deepened by the Pluto Return in 2021-2023 for any of the July 4th, 1776 USA charts used by astrologers.

Of particular relevance in our times is the rising expression of hatred and blame. Hatred is hardly a new or recent phenomenon in civilization. Blaming the Other is a specific variant of the "Us versus Them" orientation so deeply embedded in our limbic brains, which control emotions and arousal. What is different now is the extreme polarization between groups, based on aggrieved social identity. Resentment has metastasized into full-blown scapegoating. The most dramatic form is in incidences of mass violence aimed at targeted populations, perpetrated by individuals and small groups. Such acts have increased over the past three decades and are now a hallmark of the 21st century. Internationally, bombings have become typical. In America, with its gun culture, mass shootings have become commonplace. Military-style assault rifles are usually the weapon of choice. But virulent outbreaks of lethal hatred are just the most obvious expression of animus. Hatred has infected humanity and spread throughout

much of civilization, bubbling away barely concealed just below the surface. Discourse between conflicting groups is almost impossible at this point.

The Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus cycles with Pluto are all candidates to account for this current state of blame and retribution. With Uranus-Pluto, the motive is revolutionary action to claim power and challenge the status quo. With Jupiter-Pluto, a self-righteous sense of justice comes into play — moral justifications of right versus wrong. With Saturn-Pluto, domination by blunt, repressive force is a typically authoritarian expression. Old Testament-style harsh vengeance — an eye for an eye — is another form.

The three cycles between Jupiter, Saturn, and Pluto that start at the beginning of the decade are accompanied by the waning squares of Jupiter-Neptune in 2020 and Jupiter-Uranus in 2021. Both of those cycles signal three-year periods of winter-phase transition before each begins again, but any correspondences in real life events are unlikely to stand out in obvious significance. I'd like to say that Jupiter-Neptune and Jupiter-Uranus might moderate some of the extremism, but I think that will be more superficial than substantial. Civilization isn't moving through a time of sweetness and light, and the crises humanity faces are increasing, not diminishing. Any break in the dark clouds is temporary.

More important than the waning squares in those two cycles are the conjunctions that will follow as the cycles begin again. The next Jupiter-Neptune cycle begins in Pisces during 2022, with a new Jupiter-Uranus cycle kicking off in Taurus over 2023-2024. Although neither of these is particularly critical as an individual cycle, they may be relevant in the context of the 2020s as expressions of renewed faith and optimism about our abilities to change and adapt.

The middle of the decade introduces a new tonality into the archetype field with the start of a Saturn-Neptune cycle in 2025-2026. That cycle is particularly significant because the conjunction of Saturn and Neptune occurs at 1° Aries — the archetypal beginning point of the entire zodiac, metaphorically the onset of spring after winter. In this cycle, that implies a total reboot of the marriage of dreams with necessities. We might have to give up our almost limitless fantasies of the past two centuries in favor of more modest aspirations. Rather than having it all, we may be forced to define and safeguard the essentials we cannot live without.

Finally, during the waning years of the decade, in 2028-2029, the Saturn-Pluto cycle moves into its waxing square from Aquarius to Taurus. That will be accompanied by the waning Jupiter-Pluto square, effectively forming a T-square between the three bodies that were together in Capricorn at the beginning of the decade. These two cycles, birthing at the start of the decade and activating again near the end, are like the bookends of the entire decade.

Some environmental scientists believe that by that time we will already have suffered major global disasters from rapidly accelerating climate change. If this turns out to be true, then the Saturn-Pluto square might indicate an authoritarian lockdown — circling the wagons, so to speak. Another possibility in that scenario

is resource wars between nations or dealing harshly with a massive refugee crisis or a winnowing out of national populations by deciding who lives and who dies.

If climate change hasn't brought us to our knees or other disasters ravaged civilization by the late 2020s, then the implications of Saturn-Pluto and Jupiter-Pluto activating again late in the decade may not be as dire. Still, these are not gentle cycles, and the two squares in fixed signs are likely to correspond to social conflicts, political turmoil, or economic stresses.

But what if a collective awakening of consciousness is indeed growing within humanity? What if our evolution as a species toward the next level of human maturity is bubbling away under the surface, approaching critical mass? I realize that Us versus Them, sociopathic narcissism, rampant greed, lust for power, and the disconnect from nature are not about to vanish magically. We've learned, however, that change can be viral. The aphorism "*Mighty oaks from little acorns grow*" is true, and a similar process could apply to humanity's overall awareness. We know now that a very small percentage of the population that is vocal, committed, and active can be sufficient to change governments and expand cultural beliefs. Whether that can occur at the deeper levels of collective consciousness remains to be seen.

At the other end of the spectrum is the possibility of near-term human extinction from climate change. Release of methane from thawing northern permafrost and the floor of the rapidly warming Arctic Ocean could accelerate global warming dramatically. In addition, reducing or eliminating fossil fuels will actually *increase* global warming in the short run by eliminating the aerosol masking effect of particulates in the upper atmosphere. Any one of those would be catastrophic. All three together would mean the end of civilization. That would be followed by the meltdown of radioactive cores in the 450 nuclear reactors now operating around the globe. This is all hard science, and it paints a terrible picture of our future.

Our species' probable extinction is the position of a still small but increasing number of environmental and climate scientists, most notably Guy McPherson. If human extinction occurs, however — whether sooner or later — the solar system will take no notice. The Sun will blaze on as a nuclear star, planets will keep moving in their orbits, and the elegant cycles of Civilizational Astrology will continue, but no human civilization will exist to which they refer. That's the doomsday scenario. Whether true or false, astrology has nothing to say about it, so I haven't attempted to address it in this commentary.

With six outer-planet cycles starting over in the 2020s and a seventh to follow shortly after, one thing seems certain: The calculus of human meaning gets a major reboot in the 2020s. To borrow the shorthand reminder about changing our clocks twice a year, I hope that collectively we spring ahead rather than fall back.