

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

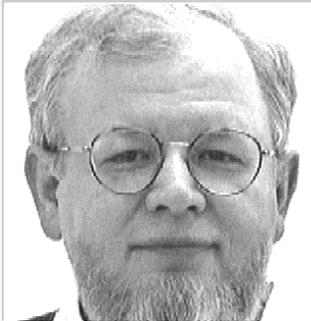
Issue #54  
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# THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



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...

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Dear friends,

Last month's April newsletter contained the first installment of a two-part essay on the astrological chart of George W. Bush. This month, in Part Two, I discuss the stark contrasts in the astrological meanings of 9-11 versus the coming year for Bush's public and private life.

Also, Mercury went retrograde on April 26th and will continue its backward dance until May 15th. The cosmic road crews are working on our neural highways again—the second of four such interruptions in 2003—so “expect delays.” To quote one of those cutesy office placards from the 1950s, “*The hurrier you go, the behinder you get.*” This would be a good time to slow down, smell the flowers, and let mundane decisions take a back seat to reflection on the meaning of your life.

Finally, I want to thank various of my friends and subscribers to this newsletter who sent me donations last month. You folks know who you are. Your generosity is much appreciated during what are severely hard times for so many of us. I am deeply grateful for your support.

## GEORGE W. BUSH — AN ASTROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

### *Part Two*

#### **Preface: Sun, Jupiter, Saturn**

The Sun in our natal charts symbolizes the essence of who we are, our deepest core purpose, and our magnetic center—the force that holds us together and gives our lives coherence and meaning. It is the source of personal power and dignity. Think of the Sun as our connection back to Cosmic Central, the pathway home to divine oneness, like a direct link between each of us and the ultimate. Any cycles that involve the Sun affect our fundamental sense of being and the unfolding direction of our lives.

Jupiter and Saturn represent expansion and contraction in astrology. Jupiter expands; Saturn contracts. Jupiter is optimistic and buoyant; Saturn is pessimistic and constrictive.

Considered as a pair, these two symbols represent the ebb and flow of personality growth in the real-world contexts of opportunity and responsibility. Both symbols are inherently social. Jupiter brings opportunity for social movement, where doorways open that allow us the psychological boost of enhanced

confidence and easier or enlarged self-expression toward others. Saturn, on the other hand, presents us with challenges and obstacles, making us feel serious and more doubtful about ourselves and others' acceptance.

When Jupiter is active in our charts, we feel new possibilities for ourselves in the world—the sense of being in the right place at the right time—in ways that encourage us to flow out of ourselves naturally toward success. And, in fact, major periods of Jupiter activity often connote literal good fortune. Luck is with us, our muse is singing, and we ride the wave.

The downside to Jupiter is overconfidence, the ego pitfalls of overextending ourselves by not recognizing the pragmatic limitations of our own capabilities. We may take on too much; our great vision may slip into grandiosity. We might also abuse the goodwill of others by taking their acceptance for granted in ways that become arrogant and self-righteous. Even when this happens, however, we usually get away with it during the period when Jupiter is active. Only later do we suffer the fall.

When Saturn is active in our charts, we feel insecure. Whatever private fears lurk beneath our surface rise up to pull us down to their dark level, like the tentacles of an octopus wrapping around us and squeezing the very life out of us as we sink beneath the waves. We feel snared, entangled, and terrified. And, in fact, periods of major Saturn activity often indicate the presence of quite literal obstacles in our worlds, especially blocks in our physical or social environments. The repercussions of our own past failures return to haunt us. We radiate uncertainty, so that our enemies come in for the kill, and even some of our friends jump ship and desert us.

The upside to Saturn is in the important work of facing reality through necessary self-development. To overcome our fears, we first have to face them, and Saturn forces us to do just that. Saturn represents duty and discipline, doing the tough stuff, the unpleasant effort of shedding illusions about our lives and getting down to the actual business of self-criticism and self-perfection. In this, Saturn is the crucial symbol in astrology for hard-won maturation through tests of character. It teaches us patience and appreciation for delayed gratification. Even so, we very rarely experience success during periods when Saturn is active. Only later do we reap the rewards.

## **The Jupiter-Sun Cycle**

Sometime after birth and before the age of twelve, Jupiter passes over the Sun's position in our charts. When it does this, we birth a new social vision that flows out of us. We sow the seeds of an enlarged role in the life of the culture around us.

Every twelve years afterwards, the cycle begins again. Each successive Jupiter-Sun conjunction brings another round of expanded enthusiasm, often with quite literal accompanying good fortune. In fact, this event has the traditional reputation of being the luckiest transit of any in astrology. In a full life of 80-some years, we experience seven Jupiter-Sun conjunctions, each of which renews our optimism and privilege, enhancing the social opportunities that exist wherever we are in our lives at that point.

## **The Saturn-Sun Cycle**

Sometime after birth and before the age of 29, Saturn passes over the Sun's position in our charts. During the Saturn-Sun conjunction, we are stopped in our tracks as our own particular anxieties and personal responsibilities well up to manifest in our lives. We learn the reality of what we most fear. In grappling with those fears, we plant the seeds whose eventual harvest can transform vanity into true humility, although we often feel humiliated in the early stages, for this is the long road to maturity.

Every 29 years from that point, the cycle begins again—three times in a full life. Each conjunction confronts us with another level of the deepest and most profound challenges of our lives (yours will be much different from mine). These emerge in ways tailored to our age, personal circumstances, and social position at the time the cycles start. The Saturn-Sun conjunction is arguably the single most important transit in all of astrology—not only due to its obvious difficulty, but because it reveals, defines, and shapes the core issues that will follow us through our lives, dogging our heels and waylaying us time and again. During the period of the conjunction, usually ten months, we are shown in real life the nature and direction of the work necessary to reconcile our inner fears and accept our outer limitations.

## George W. Bush and 9-11

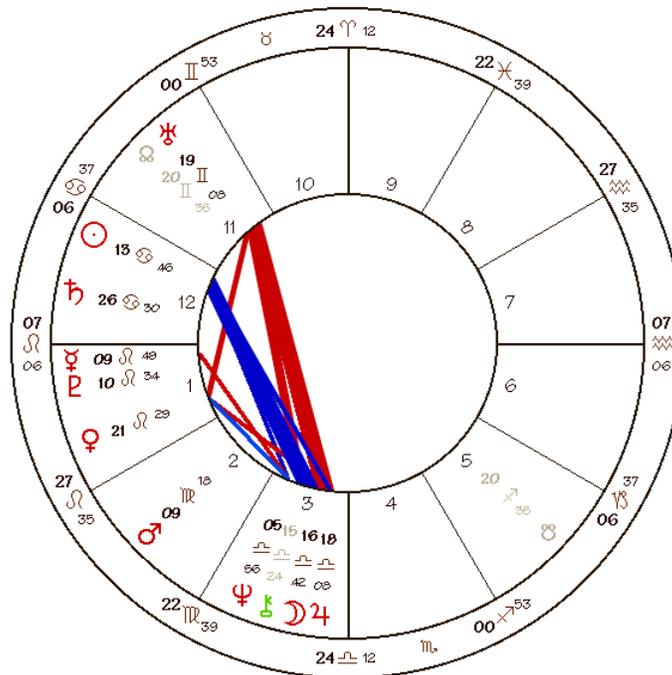
In the first year of his presidency, George W. Bush was floundering. He seemed overwhelmed, inadequate to the task of leadership, adrift without a rudder. Many of his critics crowed that Bush was simply not presidential calibre, that he wasn't smart enough to rise to the occasion.

Then came the momentous events of September 11th, 2001, and the seemingly astounding transformation of George Bush from stammering milquetoast into steely-eyed warrior.

Considered astrologically, the transformation of the President was not as astounding as it seemed. Why? Because Bush was about to undergo the beginning of his fifth Jupiter-Sun cycle.

Jupiter entered Cancer—G.W.'s Sun sign—in July of 2001, which gradually began the evolving process inside him of a new vision. Jupiter reached the exact position of Bush's Sun on September 28th, 2001, less than three weeks after 9/11, bestowing the gift of opportunity. And Jupiter remained near his Sun for nine months, all the way through May 17th, 2002.

Though seemingly confused and disturbed on the morning of the attacks, from the moment Bush stood above the wreckage at Ground Zero and responded to a New York firefighter by saying, "Soon they'll ALL hear from America!," he was in the flow of something new and unforeseen, an expanding vision of aggressive retaliation to assuage the wound to our national pride. From that day on, President Bush was increasingly galvanized, morphing from the bumbling, down-home Texas cowpoke into a fierce, gun-toting Texas Ranger. "Saddle up the posse, boys, we're goin' after them low-down, cowardly varmints, and we're gonna string 'em up!"



### George W. Bush

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

Not only was the timing perfectly fortuitous for G.W., but over the next nine months of Jupiter expanding his Sun, he realized that he'd hit a nerve. Americans were furious. Our collective myth of exceptionalism had allowed us to generally ignore terrorism and horrific deaths in faraway lands. But now we had been attacked on our own sacred soil, and—for better or worse—millions of Americans screamed for revenge. Bush's new "John Wayne" persona struck a chord with that faction of the public and provided a starring role for his Leo Ascendant. He embraced the neocon agenda and ran with the ball. And, in typical Jupiter-Sun fashion, once he gained momentum, there was no stopping him.

As a 12th-house Sun, Bush needs an archetypal vision, a Big Dream. He isn't a micromanager. He doesn't care about or want to be bothered with details. He needs a role, a persona, and a script. Suddenly Bush spoke with a new confidence (Jupiter expanding the Sun) and a strident political resolve (Uranus as leading planet in the 11th). He emerged as the protective father (Saturn in Cancer) looking out for his children (all of us).

The unique juxtaposition of 9-11 and the Jupiter-Sun conjunction provided Bush with a clear moral imperative—a renewed vision of America triumphant, an America that would not back down. To George W., his new doctrine of preemptive strikes at any nation that might attack us was simple justice (Jupiter in Libra).

As all this was unfolding, Bush's religious faith (12th house) was also expanding. His relationship with God grew into a personal mission of selfless service through the crossing of destiny and fate. Bush was, he felt, "selected" by being in the right place at the right time (Jupiter).

For George W., this is not as simple as it seems. Beneath the veneer of certainty (Leo Rising) lurk many private doubts (Saturn in the 12th). He prays that he's doing the right thing (Sun in the 12th), but he will not flinch or second-guess himself in public (Uranus in the 11th). He will neither listen to nor brook any opposition. His mind is made up, and his decision is absolute (Mercury conjunct Pluto in the 1st). Even when his private emotions vacillate (Moon in Libra square Sun in Cancer), Bush holds firm, taking his marching orders from a higher source (12th house).

President Bush has been riding this wave of positivist philosophy and righteous faith ever since 9-11. He feels that he has found his mission to uphold universal principles of order and goodness—Truth, Justice, and the American Way (Jupiter near the lower heaven), backed with massive firepower (Mars unaspected in the 2nd). Right or wrong, George W. Bush sees force as the only viable way to protect the family, insure peace for the country, and bring a hostile, foreign world into the fold. He is not cynical in this view, but heartfelt in sincerity.

Is this truth or delusion? Humble inspiration or unbounded arrogance? The case can be made either way astrologically, according to the eye of the beholder. In any case, the Jupiter-backed wave of President Bush's recent empowerment has reached a crest of commanding heights.

## **The Coming Fall**

In June of this year, Saturn will enter Cancer. This passage represents the beginning in George Bush's personal life, as well as in his presidency, of steadily building pressures that will eventually culminate in the gestation and birth of his second Saturn-Sun cycle.

This compression—through the weight of sobering new responsibilities—will reach its first peak in October of 2003. At that point, Saturn will be a mere half-degree in the zodiac away from Bush's natal Sun. From that middle month of the fall until the following summer—June, 2004—George Bush's first 29-year cycle of life-purpose development will die. The core identity that emerged in his late 20s and early 30s will finally be laid to rest.

Since 1997, Bush's life-purpose cycle has been moving through its fourth and last quarter—the winter phase, where one is freed from prior responsibilities. The last quarter of every astrological cycle represents a respite, a time of lying fallow in preparation for the birth of the next cycle, however far ahead in years that new "springtime" may be. In the Saturn-Sun cycle, the winter phase means a seven-year release from the karma of our personal fears and failings. Life always presents difficulties, no matter what's happening in our charts, but in this cycle's last quarter we take a sabbatical from the inward repercussions of personal responsibility. Whatever our past successes or failures, whatever our previous struggles, we let them go and chill out, dealing with life as it comes.

G.W.'s sabbatical ends this coming October. All the seeming freedom and detachment of those earlier years ends, supplanted by the return of stark confrontation with hard, cold reality of a type that is custom-tailored to Bush's personal fears and vulnerabilities, which reemerge suddenly in packs, like wolves, and with a vengeance.

The general meanings of this cycle's birth pains are deeply somber. Internally, these include feelings of heaviness, frustration, pessimism, weakness, vulnerability, exhaustion, and self-doubt. Externally, the

difficulties include delay, denial, blockage, and opposition, both by others and by circumstances themselves, which often will not budge. During the Saturn-Sun conjunction, we suffer the nagging sense that our world is decaying, that our luck has run out, and that life itself is conspiring to defeat us.

The other singular effect is that fear makes us stupid. I've been through two Saturn-Sun conjunctions in my own life, and I've counseled literally hundreds of clients going through this difficult birth. In every case, my own included, I saw us become our own worst enemies. The most obvious practical strategies or common-sense solutions to the problems that emerge remain obscure to us. Wrapped up in our fears and overwhelmed by our anxieties, we make absurd mistakes, gross errors of judgment and action (or, conversely, lack of judgment and inaction). When we should act, we often hesitate and second-guess ourselves. When we should wait, we often rush in where angels fear to tread. In short, during the conjunction even brilliant people become idiots and shoot themselves in the feet.

The general meanings of this transit apply to all of us, but it also has manifestations specific to each individual chart. The unique meanings of the Saturn-Sun conjunction in George W. Bush's chart pertain to the issues of the 12th house. His defenses against opposition from the outer world are nearly impregnable. He is, however, extremely vulnerable to attacks from his own secret inner demons. For Bush, self-doubt is an inevitable pitfall of this coming period. His faith in religious certainty will be challenged from within. Inward confusion and ambivalence will assault his emotions. In public, Bush will hunker down, showing a tougher resolve than ever. In private, though, he may question his very sanity.

Jungians might suggest that Bush will come up against his own unconscious shadow—the darkness within, which, up until now, he's been projecting outward onto others he sees as "evil." As a result, President Bush could become emotionally or physically ill, to a point that might require hospitalization or temporary retreat from public view.

Short of such drastic events, President Bush will certainly experience a fearful sense of isolation, like a rudderless ship pulled out to sea and engulfed by oceanic forces that make him feel small and insignificant (which is the exact opposite of what he felt during the Jupiter-Sun period, when he rode the tide). Illusion again intertwines with reality. But now, realities become dreams, and dreams become troubling, even nightmarish.

Given the intensity of my description of this astrological event, how obvious will Bush's struggle be to the rest of us? Those close to the President will no doubt see evidence of increased strain on a day-to-day basis. And outsiders with a discerning eye will catch glimpses in public appearances. Mostly, however, the profound stress will likely manifest under the surface, behind the scenes, and in private, with only occasional and sporadic eruptions into full view. Though Saturn is decidedly physical in its provocations, Bush's chart emphasizes the invisible over the visible, and the emotional over the literal. So this crisis may be predominantly psychological, although more obvious or crude repercussions cannot be ruled out. The nine months of this process will probably build from this coming fall into the summer of 2004.

## **Getting Through It**

When I was a young and eager humanistic astrologer back in the 1970s and early 80s, I counseled clients going through the Saturn-Sun conjunction to see past their blinders and glean the essential meaning of the event—to be aware of their fears, to detach from their anxieties, to be patient with themselves, and to plant conscious seeds of positive life-purpose. 10,000 sessions have taught me the hard lesson that such advice is generally useless, since it usually falls on deaf ears. Now I counsel such clients simply to tough it out, to get through the transit however they can, and to forgive themselves afterwards.

There's an old spiritual saying: "The traps don't work unless we fall in." Each of us has certain spiritual lessons to learn, and life sets traps for us. Your traps are not the same as mine, but yours lie in wait for you, and mine for me. If we don't fall into the trap, we remain unaware of our need to learn that particular spiritual lesson. The Saturn-Sun conjunction represents the harshest, most painful spiritual traps of all, and—one way or another—we all fall in. Spiritually, it's not the fall that matters, it's the salvation we gain by climbing out, which is what we strive to do over the 29 years that follow.

If George Bush were a private citizen, these troubles would be of little or no concern for most Americans. Whatever fears, anxieties, or traumas manifested in his life would be his alone. They would go no further than his immediate circle and sphere of influence. But since he holds the highest office in the land,

the circumstances that manifest will, to some extent, affect the entire nation. So we can expect a period of continuing and exasperating difficulties for our country. Those who believe in vibrational attunement as a spiritual technique will need to filter out or transcend what is likely to be a very negative and conflicted force field in the collective.

Other presidents in this century have begun Saturn-Sun cycles while in office. Franklin D. Roosevelt had Saturn on his Sun in 1933, one year after entering office. He survived quite nicely, but the nation didn't fare so well; at that point, America was suffering through the worst depths of the Great Depression.

Two decades later, Dwight D. Eisenhower was elected for his first term in 1952 with both Saturn and Neptune on his Sun, to no apparent ill effects for him or the country. (In fairness, however, Neptune often exaggerates the illusion of happiness and well-being undercut by insidious decay from within, which was a hallmark of 1950s America.)

The last president to go through a Saturn-Sun conjunction while in office was Gerald Ford in 1977. Having risen to the presidency after Richard Nixon's resignation, he was then defeated in his only bid for election by Jimmy Carter.

George W. Bush has already surprised many Americans, and he may weather this storm. Most of us manage to get through the Saturn-Sun transit intact, though usually with some conspicuous failures, a little egg on our faces, and at least one or two deep psychic scars. I won't speculate here on possible national or world events that might alter Bush's landscape in late-2003 through mid-2004. That would require an altogether different crystal ball.

Nevertheless, two indications are astrologically provocative, in my view. First, the improbable journey of this Administration is only half over. The initial coup has been a great success for President Bush, but the hard part is yet to come. Second, after the Saturn-Sun conjunction has ended, but with Saturn still mired in the 12th house, Bush will face reelection during the first pass of his second Saturn return and its simultaneous waning square to the axis of the meridian. Those two major transits are particularly discouraging for the success of further ambition in high office, suggesting voluntary or forced retirement from public view. While not insurmountable factors, they are daunting. A second term is still astrologically very much in question.

The fulcrum is what happens from next October through the following June. Those nine months will be a difficult passage—a true test of George W. Bush's character, and of ours as well.



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