



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

WHEN WORLDS COME TOGETHER

During May, the planet Saturn will overtake Venus in the predawn sky, eventually passing within less than one half degree of its brighter neighbor.

CINCINNATI, OH (May 14, 1998) – This close encounter will occur on the morning of the May 29th, at approximately 40 minutes before sunrise. Saturn and Venus will come within 0.3 degrees of each other – about the width of your little finger when held at an arm's distance from your eye.

To find the pair, look to the East and 10 degrees above the horizon – you can't miss it. Venus at magnitude -4.1 combines with the brightness of Saturn's +0.4 magnitude to put on a show of unequalled splendor. This close celestial encounter is called a conjunction. It is similar to April's rendezvous between Venus and Jupiter that occurred on the 23rd.

Some scientists surmise that a similar close encounter might explain the Christmas Star that shown over Bethlehem heralding Jesus' birth. In 6 BC, for example, a conjunction happened between Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars. Another bright conjunction occurred between Jupiter and Saturn in 7 BC.

Of greater interest, is the celestial lineup that occurs on the morning of May 21st. Looking just a little north of East to a bit south of East you will be able to view Mercury, Saturn, Venus, the Moon, and Jupiter in an ascending line from the horizon to about 20 degrees into the East South East – an infrequent show of planetary majesty!

You can view both the planetary conjunction and the planet lineup until the sun rises and its brilliance blanks out their dimmer lights. The best time for a good view is 40 minutes before sunrise (5:35 a.m.) or any time around 5:00 a.m.

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