



# September 2018 Highlight:

## Find Four Planets at Dusk in September

- ★ Try your luck locating a quartet of naked eye planets this month. All of them are bright and easy to find, but it will require venturing outdoors shortly after sunset to see all four... in addition to needing a clear sky!
- ★ Bright  $-4.8$  magnitude **Venus** is found in the W-SW and will be the most challenging to sight. You'll need a low, unobstructed view to the horizon to find this "*Evening Star*." Look about 30-40 minutes after sunset on September 1<sup>st</sup>. Venus sets earlier as the month progresses and becomes more difficult to spot by month's end. Telescopes will reveal a charming, waning crescent shape and is well worth the effort.
- ★ **Jupiter** sits in Libra, higher and to the left of Venus. You'll notice this *King of Planets* brighten significantly as twilight fades, shining at magnitude  $-1.9$ , despite its distance of 545 million miles from the Earth.
- ★ As in August, **Saturn** lingers above the famous "*teapot*" asterism of Sagittarius. Even modest telescopes reveal something *odd* about its disk! In 2018 the ring system remains favorably tilted towards the Earth and never fails to delight the observer's eye.



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- ★ The fourth planet of this alluring quartet is magnificent **Mars**, a beacon of red-orange light in the S-SE after dark. Though it is rapidly dimming and receding from its closest approach to the Earth on July 31<sup>st</sup>, the ruddy world still shines at an impressive magnitude -1.7. This Red Planet should jump out at all those willing to look upward in September.
- ★ Of the five naked eye planets, only **Mercury** is missing and is consigned to the early mornings until September 11<sup>th</sup>. Capture the *Winged Messenger* rising in the east, about an hour before sunrise. After this date, the planet is lost in the Sun's glare, heading for its *superior conjunction* (situated behind the Sun) on the 21<sup>st</sup>.



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About 30 minutes after sunset



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