

## The Crescent Moon Sails by Saturn and Venus

On the nights of **January 30<sup>th</sup>** and **February 1<sup>st</sup>**, the waxing crescent Moon sails by the planets Saturn and Venus. These conjunctions are best seen during twilight, especially the one with Saturn which is low in the sky and will set early.

On these nights, a small telescope will reveal that the waxing crescent Moon is accompanied by a waning crescent Venus! You should also notice that sunlight is illuminating about 15% of the Moon, while it illuminates 37% of Venus' disk.

As seen from Earth, the two innermost planets of our solar system, Mercury and Venus, go through phases as they orbit the Sun, like our Moon does as it orbits Earth. And most folks find that cloud-covered Venus appears most wonderful when it is viewed as a lovely crescent. Using a small telescope, try observing Venus a month later, in early March, and you will see that its crescent shape has narrowed even more to only 12%.

