A Gibbous Moon Rises with 2 Planets

On the evenings of **January 23 & 24**, the waning-gibbous Moon rises with the gas giant planet Jupiter and our neighboring planet Mars. This action takes place in the zodiac constellation Leo, the Lion. Joining the gathering is the bright star Regulus which is located some 79 light years behind the 2 planets and our Moon.

On these nights, Jupiter is located some 410 million miles (37 light minutes) behind the Moon, and it's in excellent position for telescopic observation of its 4 large Galilean moons and the striking atmospheric bands on its cloud tops. Use a small telescope and observe, over just a few hours, the solar system in motion -- as Jupiter's large moons dance around the planet. Orange-tinted Mars is located about 70 million miles away (6 light minutes). In February, both these planets reach "opposition" (opposite side of the Earth from the Sun).

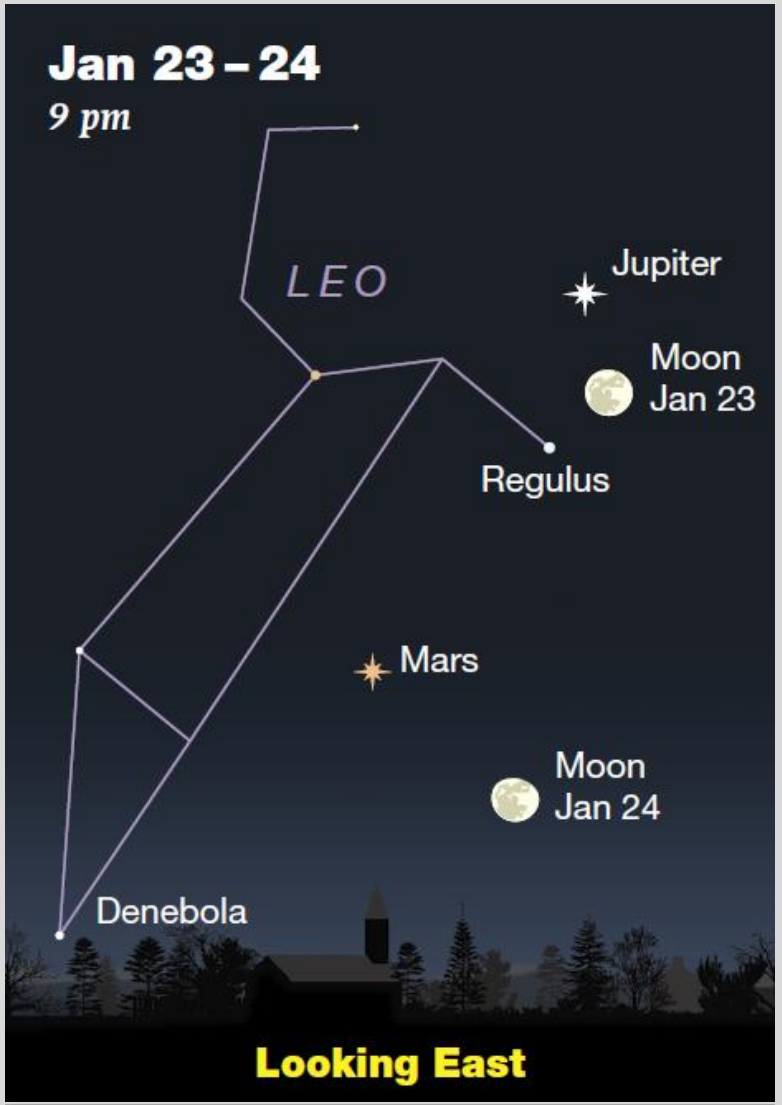

Illustration courtesy of Sky & Telescope