

STGZ246  
01/09 - 01/15  
SCIENCE OF MARS' RETROGRADE

GREETINGS MARS MARVELLERS!

AT THE END OF THIS WEEK, MARS IS ENDING RETROGRADE MOTION IN A COSMIC BACK-PEDAL. THIS HAD ASTRONOMERS SCRATCHING THEIR HEADS FOR CENTURIES, BUT NOW WE CAN SEE WHAT'S REALLY HAPPENING. LEMME SHOW YOU!

HIT THE DARKNESS ANY NIGHT THIS WEEK AFTER SUNSET. MARS IS IN THE EAST, AND ON JANUARY 12TH IT WILL APPEAR TO STOP, AND HEAD BACK THE WAY IT CAME – ENDING RETROGRADE MOTION.

MARS SWITCHES EVERY 26 MONTHS AS IT'S IN A WIDER, SLOWER ORBIT THAN EARTH. BASICALLY, WE PASS IT IN THE SKY. JUST LIKE PASSING A CAR ON THE HIGHWAY, MARS APPEARS TO SLOW RELATIVE TO THE BACKGROUND – THEN REVERSE AS WE PASS.

OBSERVERS ON VENUS OR MERCURY WOULD SEE RETROGRADE EARTH ORBITS! COOL!

BEFORE PLANETARY MOTION WAS UNDERSTOOD, PEOPLE THOUGHT WHENEVER MARS BEGAN MOVING BACKWARDS, WAR, PESTILENCE AND DEATH WERE NOT FAR BEHIND – BUT THIS IS THE END OF THAT MOTION – SO THE OPPOSITE, I GUESS?

KEEP LOOKING UP!