

## **Astronomy, God, and the Search for Elegance**

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Scientific theories must do more than merely satisfy the data; they must do so in a way that is (to use a term much favored by mathematicians) “elegant.” Kepler, Maxwell, and Einstein are examples of scientists who found that a sense of esthetic “rightness” helped them to direct their scientific intuition toward theories that could then be expressed rationally and mathematically. . . theories that could lead to deeper insights about nature. By looking closely at a handful of astronomical images, we’ll explore the way that one proceeds from an emotional appreciation of the beauty of the stars and planets, to an understanding that satisfies both reason and emotion. Ultimately, this link between “elegance” and rational truth has profound philosophical and theological implications.