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Hubble and Webb's View of the Pillars of Creation

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Credit: NASA, European Space Agency (ESA), Canadian Space Agency (CSA), Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI), Hubble Heritage Project (STScI, AURA). Image processing by Joseph DePasquale (STScI), Anton M. Koekemoer (STScI), Alyssa Pagan (STScI).

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope captures a breathtaking view of the "Pillars of Creation," a portion of the Eagle Nebula, in visible light (*left*). A near-infrared-light view from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope (*right*) helps us peer through the opaque dusty pillars in this star-forming region to reveal many more young stars embedded in this beautiful landscape.

Webb's new view of the Pillars of Creation is helping researchers revamp their models of star formation by identifying far more precise counts of newly formed stars, along with the quantities of gas and dust in the region. Hubble observations provide clues about the scorching ultraviolet light from a nearby cluster of young, massive stars that sculpt this region. Together these images build a clearer understanding of how stars form and burst out of these dusty clouds over millions of years.

Webb and Hubble are complementary observatories offering unique capabilities that enable us to better understand cosmic phenomena. Webb primarily looks at the universe in the infrared, while Hubble studies it primarily at optical and ultraviolet wavelengths. With its infrared capabilities—and a significantly larger mirror than Hubble, which captures more light—Webb is peering farther back into space and time. Hubble is in a very close orbit around Earth, while Webb is 1.5 million km away at the second Lagrange point.

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