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ICY MARTIAL CLOUDS -- Sunrise over Noctis Labyrinthus (the labyrinth of the night) on Mars shows bright clouds of water ice in and around the tributary canyons of the high plateau region in this Viking-1 orbiter view. Scientists have puzzled why the clouds cling to the canyon areas and, only in certain areas, spill over onto the plateau surface. One possibility is that water which condenses during the previous afternoon in shaded eastern-facing slopes of the canyon floor is vaporized as the early morning Sun falls on those same slopes. The picture was reconstructed from three individual black-and-white frames taken through violet, green and orange filters. It covers an area of about 10,000 square kilometers just south of the equator.

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