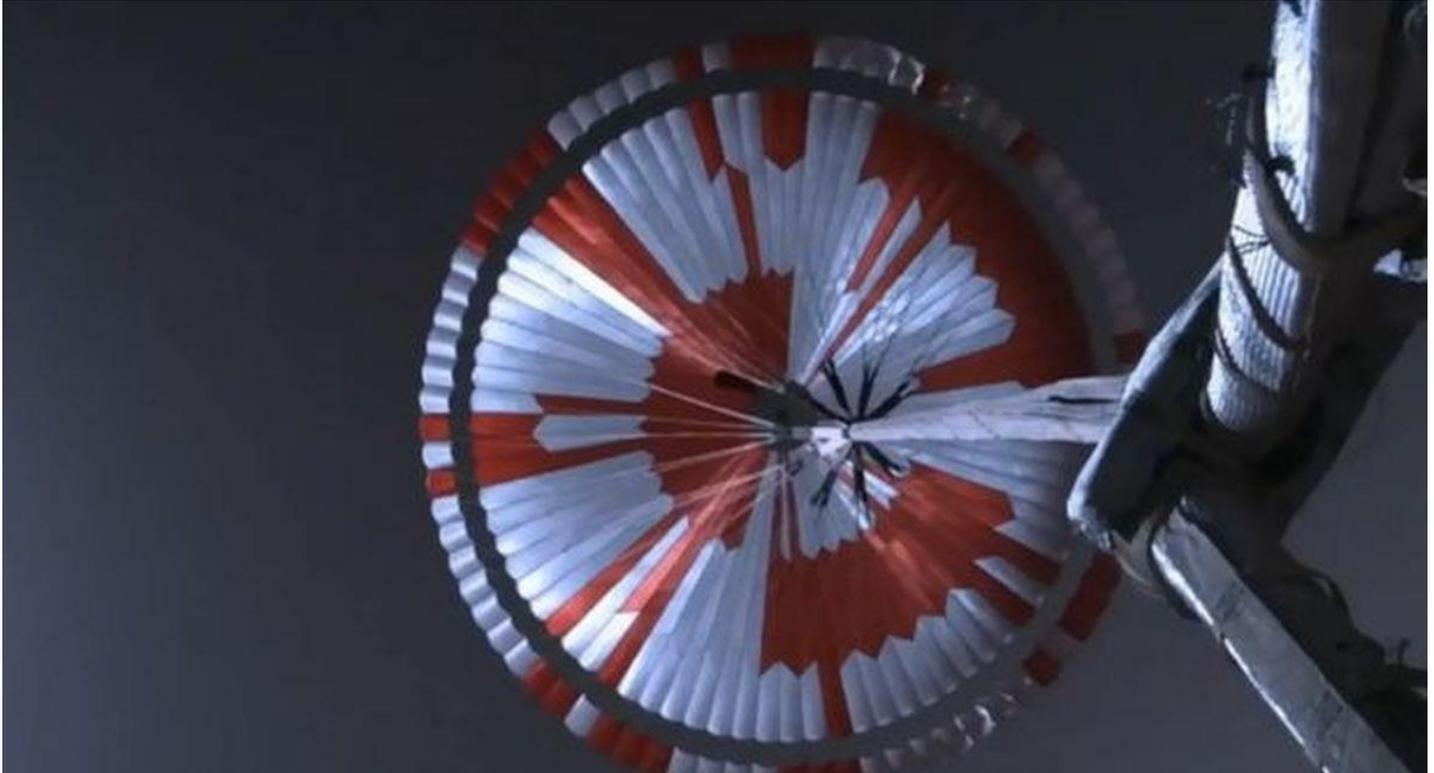




April to May 2021



The parachute which helped Perseverance to land on Mars, with its secret message displayed. The colours of the rings represent binary ASCII, the message being 'Dare Mighty Things'. The parachute was made by Heathcoat Fabrics in Tiverton, Devon.

Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech

What to look out for

6 April - Conjunction of the Moon and Saturn The waning crescent moon will swing about 4 degrees to the south of Saturn in the dawn sky.

7 April - Conjunction of the Moon and Jupiter The waning crescent moon will swing about 4 degrees to the south of Jupiter in the dawn sky.

10 April - Soyuz MS-18 spacecraft launch Russian cosmonauts will be transported to the International Space Station.

16 April - Pléiades Neo 1 Earth observation satellite launch This is to be used for Airbus and multiple rideshare payloads.

17 April - Close approach of the Moon and Mars Look for the pair above the western horizon after sunset.

20 April - Launch of a Crew-2 mission to the International Space Station A SpaceX Crew Dragon will launch four astronauts representing NASA, JAXA and ESA.

21/22 April - Lyrid Meteor Shower This is active from 16-30 April but peaks on the night of 21/22. It should be possible to spot 10-15 meteors per hour.

27 April - Supermoon This is the second of four Supermoons for 2021.

3 May - Conjunction of the Moon and Saturn The last-quarter Moon will swing about 4 degrees to the south of Saturn, in the dawn sky.

4 May - Conjunction of the Moon and Jupiter The waning crescent moon will swing about 4 degrees to the south of Jupiter, in the dawn sky.

5/6 May - eta-Aquarid Meteor shower The best show is in the Southern Hemisphere but you should still be able to see meteors in the early morning sky. Meteors are visible between 19 April and 28 May but the peak is on 5/6 May.

5 May - Moon located above and to the right of Jupiter The planet will appear like a bright white star to the unaided eye, in the morning sky.

13 May - Crescent Moon located between Venus and Mercury Use Binoculars to see the trio in the early evening twilight, looking north west.

15 May - Mercury reaches its highest point in the evening sky The planet will be shining brightly, at magnitude 0.3. See it just above the western horizon, immediately after sunset.

16 May - Conjunction of the Moon and Mars The waxing crescent moon will swing about 2 degrees to the south of Mars, in the evening sky.

17 May - Mercury at Greatest Elongation The planet will reach its greatest eastern separation from the sun, shining brightly at magnitude 0.3. Look above the western horizon shortly after sunset.

20 May - Launch of a Dragon cargo resupply mission A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket will launch supplies destined for the International Space Station. Lift-off will be from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida.

26 May - Supermoon This is known as the Full Flower Moon and is the third of four Supermoons for 2021. It will be the closest Supermoon of the year, occurring at or very close to perigee.



*The first high-resolution/colour image sent back by the Hazard Cameras on the underside of NASA's Perseverance Mars Rover, after its landing on 18 February 2021.
Image Credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech*

Useful websites

Spot the International Space Station:

https://spotthestation.nasa.gov/sightings/view.cfm?country=United_Kingdom®ion=England&city=Kettering#.Xxl13ihKhPY

<https://www.space.com>

<https://www.nasa.gov/>

<https://astronomynow.com/uk-sky-chart/>

<https://www.skyatnightmagazine.com/advice/skills/astronomy-guide-viewing-planets-night-sky/>

<https://www.timeanddate.com/astronomy/sights-to-see.html>

<https://nightskyonline.info/2021-astronomy-events/2021-predictable-astronomy-events/>

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