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The fiftieth anniversary of the first landing of Man on the Moon is currently being marked. On 16th July 1969 the 3 members of the Apollo 11 crew were blasted off from Cape Canaveral in Florida on that huge Saturn V rocket. Four days later, on 21st July, Neil Armstrong stepped on to the lunar surface, followed 19 minutes later by Buzz Aldrin who, it was learned afterwards, had quietly taken communion in the lunar module before joining Armstrong. As Aldrin explained later - "the very first liquid ever poured on the Moon, and the first food eaten there, were communion elements".

We gather from His Word that Almighty God our Creator has given the Moon a central role in the measurement of Time on the Earth. We read for example, "(David's throne) will be established for ever like the moon, the faithful witness in the sky" (Psalm 89.37, NIV). Sure enough, the Moon is just that, a faithful witness orbiting the Earth in a precise motion, and from which we gain the "month" which lies at the heart of all calendars.

It is appropriate to refer now to the late Frank Paine, one of the Bible Chronologers we occasionally come across in these Weekly Reflections. Frank and his colleagues spent years studying God's use of time in the Bible, with remarkable results. In his main book about their work and findings, "Miracle of Time", Frank writes, "It is important to remember that the whole course of time has been accounted for and recorded by the moon, which is the celestial timepiece of the people of Israel" (page 153).

We know of the Lord Jesus telling us that as the events of the Tribulation move towards their climax, "there will be signs in the sun, moon and stars" amidst much anguish, perplexity and terror on the Earth (Luke 21.25), before the coming of the Son of Man with power and great glory (v 27). There is no surprise then that when the Apollo missions came on the scene, Frank Paine asked the Lord to guide him over whether or not these lunar journeys had any time-and-date significance in terms of Bible chronology.

To cut a complicated story short, he discovered in no uncertain terms that they did: the timing of every one of the Apollo missions to the Moon, from Apollo 8, (launched 19th December 1968) to Apollo 17, (lunar landing 11th December 1972), was found to be spiritually significant. (For full details, please see Chapter 22 of "Miracle of Time" by Frank

Paine, available from www.ccftapes.co.uk). There was just one exception: no spiritual significance was found for the dates of Apollo 13 (April 1970), the mission that had to be aborted after near-disaster struck.

Before returning to Earth in Apollo 11 in July 1969, Buzz Aldrin quoted from the Psalms, “When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (Psalm 8.3-4a, KJV). Those words had added significance when read by a man who could see the whole Earth in all its profound beauty through the window of a tiny spacecraft.

In response, Frank Paine writes, “But God is mindful of man, and millions over the earth today are praising the wonderful Name of Jesus, as they experience His loving-kindness in the pathway of their individual lives. But the day of grace is rapidly drawing to an end, and God in His great mercy would use every means to warn His creatures of the approaching doom of this apostate civilisation. We can praise Him that He has kept in reserve a final means – the same for the Gentile world now as He reserved for Israel: ‘last of all He sent unto them His Son’ (Matthew 21.37 and parallels). This is the reason the Bible’s perfect record of time has been restored to the human race: it is to reveal the truth concerning the Birth, the Life, the Death and the Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God”; (quoted from “Miracle of Time” page 159).

On the exact fiftieth anniversary of the launch of Apollo 11, namely, Tuesday 16th July 2019, what happened? There was a lunar eclipse! Do we not see from this that God is still using the Moon to mark off time, until the long-promised events of “the end times” are fulfilled?

These happenings are wonderful for all “in Christ”, and deeply sobering for all others. We are right to worship the Lord in spirit and truth, for His ways are indeed “past finding out” unless He reveals them to us (egs., Job 11.7-9 / Deuteronomy 29.29 / Romans 11.33-36). We are right to watch in readiness, for events in the world are clearly gathering pace towards their climax. And we are right to witness to these truths, for truly, “narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 6.14b, KJV / John 14.6 / I Timothy 2.4-6 / II Timothy 4.1-8).