

A detailed photograph of the Mars rover Spirit on the surface of Mars. The rover is a six-wheeled vehicle with a complex mechanical structure, including a camera mast, solar panels, and various scientific instruments. It is positioned on a reddish-brown, rocky terrain under a hazy, orange sky. The text "Today in History" is overlaid in white at the bottom of the image.

# Today in History

*January 3, 2004*

▲ The robotic rover Spirit landed on Mars, and began transmitting dramatic pictures of the landscape in the search for evidence that the Red Planet once had water

**1521:** Martin Luther, German founder of Protestantism, was excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church

**1918:** New Zealand-born scientist Ernest Rutherford announced he had split the atom

**1959:** Alaska was admitted to the United States as the 49th and largest American state

**1980:** British naturalist Joy Adamson, author of *Born Free*, was found murdered in Kenya