

# Fresh Start

By Jerry Bader

## 50 Years Ago From the Moon

December 23, 2018

1968 is remembered as one of the most turbulent years in American history. Two assassinations, a violent Democratic National Convention in Chicago and a country divided over the Vietnam War left America reeling as the year drew to a close. So, it is likely the crew of Apollo 8 felt an awesome sense of responsibility as they became the first three humans to escape the grasp of Earth's gravity.

That meant Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders would also be the first to see their home planet from a distance. "We were told that on Christmas Eve we would have the largest audience that had ever listened to a human voice," recalled Borman during 40th anniversary celebrations in 2008. "And the only instructions that we got from NASA was to do something appropriate."

As they viewed God's creation in a way no other human ever had, what they deemed appropriate was to read the creation story from Genesis 1:1-10:

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day. And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.*

Each astronaut read a portion of the passage. Borman concluded with: "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a Merry Christmas – and God bless all of you, all of you on the good Earth."

The broadcast captivated listeners around the world. At first blush, the creation story may not seem all that appropriate for an unprecedented Christmas Eve broadcast. But the crew knew they would be seeing that creation in a way no one else ever had. And the broadcast is also appropriate in ways the astronauts may not have considered.

From a human perspective, we tend to think of Christ's birth as His beginning. Jesus is eternal. He was there at the creation. So, reading from Genesis was altogether appropriate on Christmas Eve from the moon. The broadcast delivered a moment the world desperately needed. On the 50th anniversary of that moment, we can be reminded that we too can always be uplifted by turning to God's Word.