



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 24, 2013

Apollo 8 Astronaut Recalls Historic Scripture Reading From Space

It was a simpler time — an era when the hearts of Americans were stirred as they heard the voices of their nation’s astronauts reading Scripture to the world from outer space. On December 23 of this year one of those astronauts, James Lovell, Command Module pilot of Apollo 8, recalled that moment on Christmas Eve 1968 when he, Commander Frank Borman, and Lunar Module pilot Bill Anders took turns reciting the first 10 verses of Genesis 1, the account of God’s creation of the heavens and the earth.



On that day 45 years ago, Lovell, now 85, joined Borman, also now 85, and Anders, now 80, to become the first humans to orbit the moon. And as an estimated one billion people watched on television — the largest single TV audience in history at that time — the trio took a few moments to humbly acknowledge God as the Creator.

“The idea of bringing people together by a flight to the moon where we encompassed everybody in our thoughts is still very valid today,” Lovell said, recalling the historic event as he stood by a part of the Apollo 8 spacecraft at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. “The words that we read are very appropriate.”

The Associated Press reported that to commemorate the event, Lovell joined local high school students and a parent at the museum, with each taking turns reading a few verses from Genesis. Illinois Governor Pat Quinn hosted the event, “calling the broadcast an uplifting message that the country needed in 1968 and one that is still applicable today,” reported AP.

“Lovell said at the time the astronauts weren’t sure who would be listening and how the broadcast would be taken,” the AP account continued,” recalling that the now iconic “Earthrise” photo (shown above) was taken by Frank Borman that same day, an image that served to reenforce the powerful truth of the Scripture the three men read to the world below.

William Anders began the astronauts’ special Christmas message back to earth, saying that “for all the people on earth, the crew of Apollo 8 has a message we would like to send you.”

He then recited: *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.”*

Jim Lovell then took over, continuing: *“And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. And God made the firmament, and*



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divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day."

Finally, Commander Frank Borman read: *"And God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good."*

At the end of his reading, Borman concluded the message from the astronauts 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."

Even 45 years ago there were atheist malcontents poised to complain about such demonstrations of good will. They were led by the founding mother of militant American secularism, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, who collected some 28,000 signatures on a lawsuit petition demanding that astronauts — or any other government employee — be prohibited from citing Scripture while on duty. In response Americans sent NASA more than 2.5 million letters and petitions in support of the Apollo 8 astronauts' actions — and O'Hair's lawsuit was ultimately dismissed by the Supreme Court.

In the years ahead the U.S. Postal Service issued a six-cent postage stamp that featured the "Earthrise" photo along with the words, "In the Beginning," in honor of the three astronauts and the day in history when they acknowledged God to the watching Earth.



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