THE SPACE RACE WAS A COMPETITION OF ECONOMICS,
TECHNOLOGY, AND POLITICS. IN THE 1960s, THE UNITED STATES
AND THE SOVIET UNION WERE BOTH SEEKING HIGHER GROUND.
EACH COUNTRY WAS STOCKPILING NUCLEAR ARMS AND ADVANCING MISSILE TECHNOLOGY. THE SOVIETS HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO ORBIT BOTH A SATELLITE AND A HUMAN.
THEY WERE CLEARLY AHEAD. I'M NASA ADMINISTRATOR JIM BRIDENSTINE. FOR FIVE YEARS, I SERVED IN THE U.S. CONGRESS ON THE SCIENCE COMMITTEE, WHICH OVERSEES NASA. WRITTEN ON THE WALL IS A SCRIPTURE: "WHERE THERE IS NO VISION,
"THE PEOPLE PERISH."

ON MAY 25, 1961,

PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY PRESENTED CONGRESS WITH THE MOST INSPIRATIONAL VISION IN HISTORY-- AND HE GAVE IT A DEADLINE. I BELIEVE THAT THIS NATION SHOULD COMMIT ITSELF TO ACHIEVING THE GOAL BEFORE THIS DECADE IS OUT OF LANDING A MAN ON THE MOON AND RETURNING HIM SAFELY TO THE EARTH. THIS VISION WAS PLACED IN JEOPARDY WHEN, IN 1967, THE APOLLO 1 FIRE KILLED GUS GRISSOM, ED WHITE, AND ROGER CHAFFEE. AND THEN IN 1968, THE UNCREWED APOLLO 6 MISSION ALSO FAILED.

STILL, THE SOVIETS PLANNED
TO FLY AROUND THE MOON

00:01:20,346 --> 00:01:25,418
AS EARLY AS THE END OF 1968.
SO NASA MADE AGGRESSIVE

00:01:25,484 --> 00:01:28,688
AND EVEN DANGEROUS PLANS.
THE PLAN WAS TO SKIP

00:01:28,754 --> 00:01:32,825
TWO APOLLO TEST FLIGHTS,
DROP THE MOON LANDER,

00:01:32,891 --> 00:01:36,396
AND GO DIRECTLY TO LUNAR ORBIT
WITH HUMANS.

00:01:36,596 --> 00:01:39,365
AT A TIME WHEN NOBODY HAD
EVER FLOWN MORE THAN

00:01:39,432 --> 00:01:43,536
850 MILES ABOVE THE EARTH,
NASA PLANNED TO FLY

00:01:43,602 --> 00:01:49,007
240,000 MILES TO THE MOON.

00:01:49,075 --> 00:01:52,579
NASA CONSIDERED THE RISKS.
THE SATURN V ROCKET HAD NEVER

00:01:52,644 --> 00:01:56,048
FLOWN A CREW BEFORE.
ITS PREVIOUS MISSION WAS

00:01:56,114 --> 00:01:58,851
A FAILURE.
CRITICAL COMPONENTS WERE NOT

00:01:58,918 --> 00:02:03,356
READY, SUCH AS MISSION CONTROL,
COMMUNICATION NETWORKS,
SOFTWARE AND INSTRUMENTATION.
TRAJECTORIES AND NAVIGATION

WERE NOT EVEN UNDERSTOOD
LET ALONE CALCULATED.

AN ASTRONAUT CREW
AND A FLIGHT CONTROL TEAM

WERE NOT TRAINED, AND THERE WAS
NO ABILITY TO RECOVER THE CREW

IF THEY RETURNED AT ALL.
FINALLY, WITHOUT A MOON LANDER,

APOLLO 8 WOULD HAVE
ONLY A SINGLE ENGINE.

IT WOULD NEED TO BE REIGNITED
MANY TIMES TO GET TO THE MOON,

TO ENTER LUNAR ORBIT,
TO CHANGE ORBITS WHILE AT

THE MOON, TO EXIT LUNAR ORBIT,
AND TO FLY BACK TO EARTH.

IN THE PREVIOUS MISSION,
THAT SINGLE ENGINE

FAILED TO REIGNITE EVEN ONCE.
IF IT FAILED NOW,

OUR ASTRONAUTS WOULD BE
LOST FOREVER.

THE OPTIMUM EARTH MOON ALIGNMENT WOULD PLACE APOLLO 8 IN ORBIT AROUND THE MOON IN JUST FOUR SHORT MONTHS.

A DANGEROUSLY AGGRESSIVE SCHEDULE GIVEN ALL THAT WAS NEEDED TO BE ACCOMPLISHED. EVEN MORE WORRISOME,

OUR ASTRONAUTS WOULD BE IN LUNAR ORBIT ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

ANY FAILURE WOULD WRECK CHRISTMAS FOR THE ENTIRE NATION.

NASA WORKED OVERTIME. AND NASA WAS DEDICATED.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, FRANK BORMAN, JIM LOVELL, AND BILL ANDERS WERE THE FIRST HUMANS TO ORBIT THE MOON.

AND THE FIRST HUMANS TO SEE AN EARTHRISE

ABOVE THE MOON'S SURFACE. AS THEY ORBITED THE MOON,
THEY MADE THEIR LAST BROADCAST BEFORE ATTEMPTING TO REIGNITE THEIR SINGLE ENGINE TO RETURN HOME.

THIS BROADCAST WAS SEEN OR HEARD BY ONE OUT OF EVERY FOUR PEOPLE ON THE EARTH, INCLUDING THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE SOVIET UNION'S IRON CURTAIN, WHERE CHRISTMAS WAS STILL ILLEGAL. THIS WAS THEIR MESSAGE.

FOR ALL THE PEOPLE BACK ON EARTH, THE CREW OF APOLLO 8 HAS A MESSAGE THAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEND TO YOU.

"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

00:04:46,386 --> 00:04:51,090
"UPON THE FACE OF THE WATERS."
"AND GOD SAID, 'LET THERE BE

00:04:51,156 --> 00:04:56,361
"'LIGHT,' AND THERE WAS LIGHT."
"AND GOD SAW THE LIGHT.

00:04:56,428 --> 00:05:04,903
"AND IT WAS GOOD."
"AND GOD DIVIDED THE LIGHT

00:05:04,971 --> 00:05:08,441
"'DAY,' AND THE DARKNESS
"HE CALLED 'NIGHT.'

00:05:08,507 --> 00:05:12,277
"AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING
"WERE THE FIRST DAY.

00:05:12,345 --> 00:05:14,147
"AND GOD SAID,
"'LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT

00:05:14,213 --> 00:05:16,816
"'IN THE MIDST OF THE WATERS,
"'AND LET IT DIVIDE THE WATERS

00:05:16,882 --> 00:05:22,988
"'FROM THE WATERS.
"AND GOD MADE THE FIRMAMENT,

00:05:23,055 --> 00:05:25,757
"AND DIVIDED THE WATERS
"WHICH WERE UNDER THE FIRMAMENT

00:05:25,824 --> 00:05:28,593
"'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."

"AND GOD SAID, "LET
"THE WATERS UNDER THE HEAVEN

BE GATHERED TOGETHER
"INTO 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."
AND FROM THE CREW OF APOLLO 8,

WE CLOSE WITH GOODNIGHT,
GOOD LUCK, A MERRY CHRISTMAS,

AND GOD BLESS ALL OF YOU,
ALL OF YOU ON THE GOOD EARTH.
00:06:14,740 --> 00:06:18,543
TODAY, WE ARE STILL
STRIVING FOR HIGHER GROUND.

93
00:06:18,610 --> 00:06:21,947
THIS TIME, WE'RE DOING IT
WITH OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS,

94
00:06:22,014 --> 00:06:25,918
INCLUDING RUSSIA.
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, REMEMBER

95
00:06:25,985 --> 00:06:30,490
NASA'S DARING FEAT OF 1968.
THINK ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO

96
00:06:30,555 --> 00:06:32,925
RISKED THEIR LIVES,
AND THE PEOPLE WHO

97
00:06:32,992 --> 00:06:37,697
GAVE THEIR LIVES TO PRESERVE
OUR FREEDOMS, INCLUDING

98
00:06:37,764 --> 00:06:40,399
THE FREEDOM TO CELEBRATE
CHRISTMAS.

99
00:06:40,466 --> 00:06:45,138
MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY NEW YEAR,
AND AD ASTRA.

100
00:06:45,204 --> 00:06:46,973
[ MUSIC ]