

Mark Burnett Working on 'The Bible' Sequel, to Air on NBC Next Spring

Fans of last year's record-breaking *The Bible* have reason for celebration: Major network NBC will air a sequel next year.

Mark Burnett and his wife, Roma Downey, will produce *A.D.: Beyond the Bible* as a follow-up to their hugely popular miniseries, which aired on the History Channel last spring.

The Bible premiered to 13.1 million viewers, and the 10-hour miniseries beat almost everything else on television. It was the third most-watched cable series or miniseries of the year. NBC is hoping to break that record with the sequel.

"We are firmly in the 'event' business and nothing has more event potential than *A.D.* as it continues immediately after the *The Bible* ended," NBC Entertainment chairman Robert Greenblatt said in a statement.

The 12-hour miniseries is expected to take up the story of the New Testament after the crucifixion of Jesus, and will contain other elements as well, Burnett told *TV Guide Magazine*.

"You've got parts of the Bible," Burnett said when asked what will be used as source material for *A.D.*, which is a working title. "Josephus was Jewish and wrote one of the most incredible historical documents [in the first century]. There's also great archeology and a lot of writing to mine."

NBC Entertainment President Jennifer Salke added: "Everyone's lives were completely altered in an instant and the immediate aftermath of Christ's death had an impact on his disciples, his mother Mary, and key political and religious leaders of the time. In the first episode alone you see the last moments

of the Crucifixion, Judas taking his own life after betraying Christ, Peter denying Jesus three times, and then the miracle of the Resurrection.”

Burnett spoke of series like *The Tudors* and *The Borgias*, which both “weave fiction and history, as inspiration,” explained *TV Guide Magazine*. The magazine asked if this means *A.D.* will contain some fictional elements and perhaps original characters. Burnett said yes.

“Much the way HBO’s *Rome* did. With the spirit of history. Clearly *A.D.* is not predominantly Bible stories. This goes beyond that. But we spoke to all our advisers and our huge network, NBC, and they can’t wait for this.”

The producer said *A.D.* will likely last more than one season.

“It could run in the same way as *Game of Thrones*, 12 hours year after year. I don’t think for a minute that *A.D.* lasts for just a season,” he explained.

Burnett, who produces *The Voice* for NBC, also talked about why he picked the network to air his next project.

“I chose NBC because I believe they could turn this into an enormous event,” he said. “This is more than TV for us. When you have the amount of passion that Roma and I have for a subject, you’re willing to do anything it takes to launch and make it happen.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, British playwright and screenwriter Simon Block will write the series. A director and star have not been set.

In addition to the sequel set for next year, an edited-down movie version of *The Bible* will be released in theaters Feb. 28. [Click here](#) to watch the trailer for *Son of God*.