

'The Bible' Producers Reveal Childhood Experiences That Shaped Their View

For **Mark Burnett** and **Roma Downey**, the three years spent producing *The Bible* miniseries for the History Channel have been a long time coming. Both can point to individual childhood experiences that laid the foundation for the 10-hour event.

"I recall, as a little girl in Ireland, we had a big, beautiful, leather-bound Bible that had a place of honor on a special table in our good room," Downey says. "We would gather around, and my father would read Scripture to us. I was also raised through Catholic school. So there were always Bible stories. That was my entire childhood."

Burnett, on the other hand, was raised in a Scottish family, but grew up in London, where it was common for the Bible to be taught in public schools from kindergarten through high school. For many years, Burnett viewed the Bible as a strict rulebook and believed that "something really bad could happen" should he ever deviate from it.

"But as I've grown older, and especially through this project, I've seen the love in it," he says. "It is a serious rulebook, but there's a different way to look at it. The rules are rules of love. I feel like I've understood—that I've grown to understand that over time—and this project especially has made me know that."

The three-year production process has likewise impacted Downey, who hopes viewers will be touched by the visual retelling of the Bible's most iconic narratives.

"When you learn the Bible as a child, you see it through a

child's eyes," she says. "There's something about revisiting many of these stories as an adult and recognizing the frailty and humanness of the characters that we filmed.

"This is everyone's story. And to get to work on this project of a lifetime with the love of my life, Mark, has just been absolutely the most joyful experience ever."