

God invented the three-act formula

When I studied screenwriting, I discovered that the basis of any successful novel, stage play, or film, is the three-act formula. Simply put, it's a beginning, a middle, and an end.

In the beginning, the artist creates his characters and their setting. Next, he gets them into trouble. Finally, after they've learned valuable lessons through the experience of evil, he delivers them. Sound familiar?

In *Field of Dreams*, writer Phil Robinson creates a cornfield and a man. Next, a voice tells the man (Ray Kinsella) to destroy the cornfield and build a baseball diamond; something miraculous is going to happen. This is all Act I. The hardest part, Act II, follows.



In Act II, Kinsella's faith is tried when the miraculous thing carries. Building the field put Kinsella in debt, and now all the townsfolk think he's crazy. A handful of people believe, but only in the end (Act III) does Kinsella find financial, spiritual, and moral redemption in the eyes of all.

That's how simple life is, folks. Not easy, but simple.

Man did not invent this three-act formula. God did—with the first three verbs of Genesis 1:1-2. ■

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

God's big fat glorious predictable rut

I am going to tell you how God does business. This sounds presumptuous of me, but it's not. God Himself tells us—in so many words. Who would ever have the audacity to say that God is predictable? Me, that's who. I can say it because it's true.

God doesn't mind that I'm telling you this. In fact, He wants me to spill the beans. God has nothing to hide; He wants to be known; He wants you to know what He's doing; He doesn't mind that He's in a big fat glorious predictable rut. His method hasn't changed since the dawn of Eon 1, and it's not about to change now. Seeing as this is so, it's strange that so few know of it and fewer yet use it to comfort themselves over the long haul of life.

It has to do with verbs

That's right, folks. God's big fat glorious predictable rut has to do with action words—three action words, to be exact. When we analyze the first three verbs of God's written revelation to us, we will see the pattern of how God operates throughout the eons.

Genesis 1:1-2, from the Concordant Version of the Old Testament:

"Created by the Elohim were the heavens and the earth. Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos. Yet the spirit of the Elohim is vibrating over the surface of the water."

Here then are the first three verbs it pleased God to write—in His own words:

- 1) CREATED
- 2) BECAME
- 3) VIBRATED

Once you see this, grasp it, and apply it to your life, all of your fiery trials will cease to mystify you. Ho, am I a prophet? How do I know you're enduring fiery trials? Don't be too impressed; fiery trials are standard divine operating procedures for earthly beings. They're the middle verb of God's three-part operation, and they are utterly predictable.



Created

"Created by the Elohim were the heavens and the earth."

The first thing God does is creates. He has to have a vessel, or a pot, on which to work. Since nothing exists apart from God, He has to create it Himself. The verb "create" shows us God's power. We all love to see God making things; we stand in awe of God's ability. We have no problem with this verb; it's marvelous. It's the second verb that shakes us up and makes us wonder if God's crazy.

Became

"Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos."

Holy heck. We only have one verse to enjoy God's creative prowess and then—BAM—down we go into a head-shaking despair with the following declaration: "Yet the earth became a chaos and vacant, and darkness was on the surface of the submerged chaos."

Here is the pattern, then, for all of God's future activities: God creates, and then ruins. He wants to ruin all along (hang in there; it's not His end game), but He can't until He creates. So first He creates, and then He steps back to admire His handiwork. Well, yes and no. He admires His handiwork, then soon begins contemplating how to foul it up. Don't panic; this is God's standard procedure; never look for

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...God's big fat glorious predictable rut

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any variation upon this theme—you simply won't find it. When you see a creation, no need to even hold your breath in suspense concerning Verb 2; the slam is on its way. Count on it; it never happens otherwise.

Your next question will be a natural one. It will be the same question Cindy Lou Who asked the Grinch when she caught him trying to stuff her Christmas tree up the chimney: "Why, Santa Claus? Why?"

Vibrated

God created the heavens and the earth, and then the earth—BANG—became a chaos and vacant. It doesn't matter how many years intervened between the creation and the disruption, or that God used an intermediary to accomplish it. All of this—the creation and the disruption—is the action and intention of the Deity. And so, thankfully, is the following:

"Yet the spirit of the Elohim is vibrating over the surface of the water."

Now we're going to see the end game. Now we're going to see the loving care of God's innermost heart. God's spirit is the most loving power on Earth. When that spirit vibrates, we will soon behold something better than



from a backdrop of darkness, devastation, and cold. He lives for this third verb. The other verbs He has to do in order to get to this one. The first two verbs, He endures. And so do you.

God is not the Grinch. The Grinch changed, but God does not change. God does more than return our Christmas tree. He takes the tree, only to return with a forest. He creates your little red ornament, hands it to you, takes it away, teaches you patience, endurance and trust during the loss, then returns the ornament—along with a treasure chest full of unfathomable gems.

Come quickly, Lord Jesus. ■

the first earth. If the first earth was the best, God would never have ruined it. He didn't kill it; He ruined it. He ruined it in order to bless it ten thousand times beyond what it was at first. God *created* at the beginning, but now His spirit *vibrates*. His *spirit* does this. His spirit is light and love and warmth, but these characteristics lay dormant apart

WHAT A REVELATION!

GOD MAKES A MAN BLIND TO MANIFEST HIS POWER

"And passing along, He perceived a man, blind from birth. And His disciples ask Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but it is that the works of God may be manifested in him.'" —John 9:1-3

Do you realize what this passage is telling us? God purposely created a man blind so that His Son could heal him. For what purpose? That His gracious and loving works might become evident. Let's apply this principle to both the big and the small picture.

The big picture is Genesis 1:1-2. God creates the earth only to destroy it. The purpose? To demonstrate His works. "Rabbi, who sinned, that this earth should be destroyed?" The answer: *no one*. "Sin" means "to miss the mark." God did not miss the mark when the first earth became a chaos and vacant. Even if Satan was the one who wrecked it,

This is your life

God did not sin; this is what God wanted Satan to do; we're looking at this from God's viewpoint. Now to the small picture, which looms large to you: your life.

"Rabbi, who sinned, (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE), or (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE)'s parents, that (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE) should be in such a traumatic predicament?"

Jesus answered, "From the point of view of my cross, the new creation, and the justification of sin, neither (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE) sinned, nor (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE)'s parents. This predicament has come from the hand of God so that the works of God may be manifested in (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE)."

Welcome to the three-act drama that is your life. ■

This is what God does—over and over

God creates Adam and Eve. The next thing we know, the first couple sins and is driven from Eden. Yet now the spirit of God vibrates, and the stage is set for a Savior; no sin, no Savior. God created Adam (mankind) to rule the earth. Adam did this for a short time ("God created the heavens and the earth"), but then God soon pulled the rug out ("the earth became a chaos and vacant") and gave angels charge over the tree of life. Is this permanent? No. Humanity will once again rule ("yet the spirit of God vibrates"), but only after an interim of humiliation and discipline. God never forgets the original promise.

God tells Eve she will produce offspring that will overcome the Adversary. She births Cain and thinks: *This is the one*. Well, yes and no. Yes, her offspring will overcome the Adversary, but no, it will not be Cain, but offspring born four-thousand years hence. Did God lie? He did not. Eve got ahead of the program, is all. She did

not know about the second verb, or how long it would last.

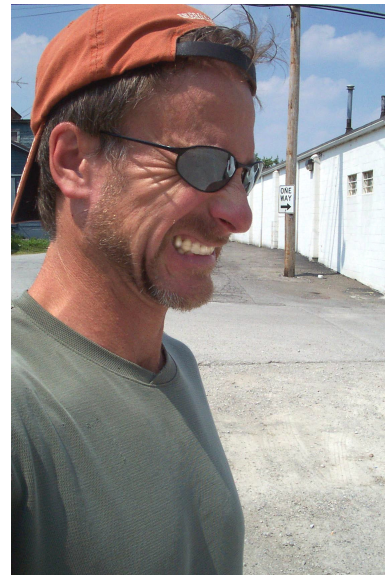
God calls Israel at Sinai to be a nation before Him. No sooner does Moses descend Mt. Sinai than Israel is dancing around a golden calf. God created Israel, only to wreck her. He eventually divorces her. Is this the end? No. He will yet vibrate upon her "waters" and manifest His power and love upon the field of her weakness. In the meantime, God visits the nations.



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Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



“Yet you be sober in all things; suffer evil as an ideal soldier of Christ Jesus; do the work of an evangelist; fully discharge your service.”

I have to admit that the motivation factor doubles when I lend Paul, in my mind, the booming voice of James Earl Jones. ■



Don't give up now; we're "headin' for the corn"

There are so many favorite parts to my favorite movie, *Field of Dreams*. I love it when Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) hears the voice in the cornfield: “*If you build it, he will come.*” Ray didn’t have to go to church to hear God; he was outside checking his crops when God’s spirit hit.

No one else heard the voice; what a parallel to our walk in Christ. How is it that you can hear the call of Christ in your life, whereas others can’t? The simple answer is: God is only speaking to you; He’s not speaking to everyone else. As our Lord said to His disciples: “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, yet to those it has not been given” (Mt. 13:11). Therefore, it is not to your personal credit that you hear, and neither is it the fault of others who don’t.

Kinsella is part of a small band of “fools” before whose eyes miraculous events transpire—on a simple baseball field. Ray’s wife, Annie, doesn’t hear the voice, but she does witness the joy of the miraculously vivified baseball players.

The voice speaks again, telling Ray to head to Boston for the sake of another misfit: Terrance Mann (James Earl Jones). Mann is a retired writer tired of living. Kinsella revives Mann’s will by the sheer force of his enthusiasm, and both Mann and Kinsella now hear the Voice’s most epic statement of all: “*Go the distance.*”

Oh! God has used this line so many times in my life. When I get tired of this call and its trials, in comes this phrase. Paul says the same thing to Timothy in 2 Tim. 4:5—

...this is what God does

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Speaking of the nations, God creates a tough, confident Pharisee named Saul, then ruins his career in a single hour. But then the spirit of God vibrates, and out comes Paul. But even this triple-verb event divides into a subdivision: God creates Paul, and tells him, “You’re the first member of the body of Christ, and you’re going to be My witness before kings.” Next thing Paul knows, he’s getting beaten, stoned, swamped, and shipwrecked. (Well, standard procedure.) Next, God gives Paul a vision of the third heaven. Not long after, Paul dies alone in Rome.



Wait until the dude wakes up.

A hint of our evangel of justification by faith came beforehand to Abraham. Before he was circumcised, Abraham emerged from his tent at God’s behest to consider the stars. God said, “If you can count these, so shall your seed be.” Abraham gave up after 95. He believed God, and God counted it for righteous-

No amount of years can strain God’s memory concerning what He said He would do for you: *glorify your body.*
—Phil. 3:21

ness. Next thing we know, justification by faith disappears from view and in comes law through Moses. Does God forget His promise of justification by faith? Not hardly.

“The law, having come four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not invalidate, so as to nullify the promise” (Gal. 3:17).

Christ has promised that we will be snatched away to be together with Him at the right hand of God forever. Yet now we find ourselves buffeted and friendless. Do these present experiences invalidate the promises of God? No. In fact, they are an essential part of the promises of God. They’re the second verb of God’s three-verb project.

Stand by, for the spirit of God is about to be vibrating big-time. ■