

1-1-2011

Editors' Notes

Stuart Love
slope@pepperdine.edu

D'Esta Love
dlove@pepperdine.edu

Jeff Miller

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Love, Stuart; Love, D'Esta; and Miller, Jeff (2011) "Editors' Notes," *Leaven*: Vol. 19: Iss. 1, Article 2.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol19/iss1/2>

This Editor's Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the Religion at Pepperdine Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Leaven by an authorized editor of Pepperdine Digital Commons. For more information, please contact bailey.berry@pepperdine.edu.



Editors' Notes

D'ESTA LOVE AND STUART LOVE

Over time *Leaven* has produced issues on Gospels such as *The Gospel of John* (3/2, 14/1) and *Ministry in Luke-Acts* (5/2). Never have we treated, however, the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke as a sequence in a given year—considering their individual messages as three portraits of Jesus. That is our objective in 2011. Jeff Miller, a New Testament scholar at Milligan College, is serving as guest editor of our first issue on the Gospel of Mark. Subsequent issues are being edited by Mark Black of Lipscomb University and Kindy Pfremmer DeLong of Pepperdine University. Allow us now to introduce this issue.

Mary Ann Tolbert, a contemporary scholar, writes in her introduction to “The Gospel According to Mark” in the NISB:

The ministry of Jesus according to the author of Mark is one of healing the sick, lame, and blind who come to him in overwhelming numbers; of arguing with religious leaders who oppose his work, fear his popularity, and plot to kill him; and of teaching recalcitrant disciples who initially leave everything to follow him and then in the end betray him to his enemies, flee when trouble comes, and deny they ever knew him. Along the way, Jesus is called the Son of God by a voice from heaven (1:11; 9:7), affirmed as God's powerful Son by demons he exorcizes (1:24; 3:11; 5:7), even though he often orders them to be silent about his identity (1:25, 34; 3:12), and finally confesses openly before a Jewish council that he is indeed the Messiah, “the son of the Blessed One” (14:61–62).¹

As our authors will demonstrate, for Mark the death of Jesus is essential to understanding adequately the identity of Jesus as the Son of God. Put in another way, the cross informs Christ's mighty deeds, preaching, and teaching. Paul Achtemeier has put this well:

The only ones who are able to identify Jesus as Son of God during his earthly career are those unaffected by that redemptive destiny: God himself (1:11; 9:7), and the demons (1:24; 3:11; 5:7). For all others, until Jesus' destiny is fulfilled on the cross, his identity as Son of God remains hidden.²

Much more could be said, but when we turn to Mark's passion account (Mark 11.1—16.8), the final story of the disciples is not a pretty one. Peter and all of the disciples, affirm that they will not desert Jesus (Mark 14.26–31). But in Gethsemane the disciples sleep (Mark 14.37, 40, 41) for “their eyes were very heavy, and they did not know what to say to him” (Mark 14.40). As predicted (Mark 14.27), all of them desert Jesus and the treachery they thought unthinkable takes place. Jesus is left alone. Allow us one final quotation to summarize our point. Raymond Brown states:

1. *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*. 1801.

2. “Mark, Gospel of,” *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 4:557.

In that transition the predictions of the disciples' flight and Peter's denials set a tragic tone, and in what follows the element of failure and abandonment is stronger in Mark than in any other passion narrative. The isolation of Jesus is dramatized in three steps as he moves away from the body of the disciples, from the chosen three, and then falls to the earth alone to beseech the Father three times to take the cup from him—a cup of suffering that in 10:39 he had challenged his disciples to drink.³

We will stop at this point because we don't want to anticipate the work of our writers. Guest editor Jeff Miller has gathered a combination of writers who have written substantive articles, illustrated the articles with sermons from key texts in Mark, and supplied us with two poems about what is probably the earliest Gospel in the New Testament. We believe you will read and use this issue repeatedly in your teaching, preaching and prayerful study. Now, we carry forward our introduction through the words of Jeff Miller.

JEFF MILLER, GUEST EDITOR

The Gospel According to Mark is about Jesus. Yes, it is about the drama of discipleship, but Jesus is the main character in this drama. It is indeed about freedom from fear, but Jesus is the key to this freedom. It is a clear call to proclaim the resurrection—the resurrection of Jesus, of course. Though Mark's Gospel grows ever deeper with each fresh investigation, in the end it is still about Jesus. Thus it is no surprise that this volume of *Leaven* focuses on Jesus, Jesus through Mark's eyes.

This issue of *Leaven* begins with a sermon. We begin this way not only because of the obvious importance of preaching, but also because of the nature of Mark—Mark was written by a preacher and storyteller who likely learned from a preacher and storyteller, and his stories were first communicated orally. Moreover, the opening sermon, by **ALEX ROBINSON**, is about questions. Mark is full of questions, especially questions about who Jesus is. Thus Alex's sermon springs from the premise that the characters' questions, especially their unanswered questions, are asked also of the reader.

The volume then continues with two articles about the centrality of Jesus and Jesus' identity in Mark. These articles are by **KEVIN LARSEN** of Mid-Atlantic Christian University and **CHRIS KEITH** of Lincoln Christian University. As mentioned above, Mark's Gospel begs to be proclaimed. Thus each article in this volume is accompanied by a worship resource. A sermon by **LAURA BUFFINGTON** supplements Kevin's article. Her sermon focuses on Jesus' Transfiguration, a story central to Kevin's article. A sermon by **LIESL HUHN** investigates the healing of the blind man of Bethsaida and thus appropriately follows Chris's article on the identity of Jesus.

Next, **HOLLY CAREY** of Atlanta Christian College provides an article, and **ANNA BUTLER** adds a sermon, on the story of the Syrophenician Woman. Though these authors did not work together, both find a message of inclusiveness in this perplexing pericope.

The following companion pieces are an article by **SCOTT WOMBLE** of St. Louis Christian College and a poem by **HEATHER HOOVER** of Milligan College. Each piece recognizes the beauty of the gift given by the woman who anointed Jesus in Bethany.

BARRY BLACKBURN of Atlanta Christian College considers the friend-assisted paralytic of Mark 2. He looks at the story from four points of view, and **BONNIE BOWMAN THURSTON** adds a fifth with her poem, "The Mat."

The volume includes a guide to resources for preaching Mark, written by **CURTIS BOOHER** of Milligan College. Finally, we begin as we started—with questions. At the beginning Alex Robinson's sermon tuned our eyes and ears to questions as we read this issue of *Leaven*. At the closing, a reading by **LEE MAGNESS** explores the great questions of the Gospel of Mark and the insights that come from them.

3. Raymond Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 661.