



**To what extent did Jesus bring the age of the Messiah?
To what extent didn't He?**



You can read this tension in the Gospels. The outpouring of the Spirit brought the promised power. It brought full forgiveness, righteousness and acceptance, but not the national restoration that the disciples expected. Will you restore the kingdom to Israel? Acts 1:6. This must wait until the time of the Gentiles is finished, Luke 21:24, Romans 11:25. The end of the age is not yet. Our eschatology is much more complex. We are still (at the time of writing), waiting. We are caught between the now and the not yet. The new age is now, but it is also the future.



This is one of the reasons we meet on Sunday, six days of creation and the sabbath rest of salvation through faith in Jesus, Hebrews 4:1-10. Eight is the number of new beginnings. We are by faith children of the new age, the 8th day. So we do not meet on the first day of the week but the eighth day of the week. We are making a prophetic statement. It is an anticipation of the second coming of Christ.



What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory, and his disciples believed in him. John 2:11



**So what was the sign?
How did He reveal His glory?
What did the disciples believe?**



The Small Interpretation

This first miracle, this sign as John calls it is also Jesus most common enduring, ongoing miracle.

Jesus takes people like us, ordinary, weak, dull people and changes us into something better, something beautiful, something glorious. He puts His power into us. He makes us more than we could ever be without Him.

He turns our water into His wine. Jesus transforms our reality.



To bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. Isaiah 61:3

And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17



**What parts of you need to be transformed?
Do you have the faith to believe for this?**

Put this in a prayer.



In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:25

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Water and Wine



Read John 2:1-11

John records seven miracles (exc. The Resurrection). By his own admission He is selective in the ones he records (John 21:25). He does not call them miracles; he calls them signs. Doing this emphasises that they convey meaning.

What is the difference between a sign and a miracle?

Mary, Jesus' mother, seems to have been the one who knew the family. Jesus and his disciples seem to have been invited as a consequence. It was not uncommon for a travelling Rabbi to be invited to a wedding; his presence would bless the couple.



They run out of wine. This was socially embarrassing and a bad start for a wedding.
Why do you think they ran out of wine?

There are several possibilities. Too many guests (it was, after all, Mary+13). The guests drank too much, they did not prepare for enough, or they could not afford enough.



**Does turning water into wine seem like a strange first miracle?
What would you have expected Jesus' first miracle to be?**

This is a strange story and a strange miracle. If Jesus' disciples were with Him, they had already seen some miracles, the catch of fish, the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, John describes this as the first sign. It could be that he sees a clear distinction between signs and miracles, or it could be that he just means it is the first he is recording. It has deep significance once the imagery is worked out.



Most of Jesus' miracles were healings, but He did quite miracles with inanimate objects.
For example?

When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.' John 2:3



**Why did Mary want to get Jesus involved?
What do you think she expected Jesus to do?
What does this tell us about her ideas about who Jesus is?
Was this Mary's problem?**



She does not tell Jesus what she wants Him to do; she just points out the problem.
**Why?
Would we, do we, do this?**



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'Woman, why do you involve me?' Jesus replied. 'My hour has not yet come.' John 2:4



In the culture, addressing His mother this way was not impolite.

What do you think Jesus meant by this response?

Was a lack of wine at a wedding Jesus' problem?

His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' John 2:5

Again, what did she expect?

In this story, Mary acts as a catalyst. (A little like the servant girl in the story of Naaman). She connected Jesus to the problem. She knew the problem and the solution.



Can we fill this role?

Would you do whatever Jesus told you to do?

What does Jesus tell the servants to do?

At this point, the servants have no idea what they are doing. Filling stone purification jars was a frequent, normal thing to do. They had no idea there was a bigger picture.

Is this true of us?



Don't stare at empty water jars. Fill them.

Sometimes, when you are just filling a water jar, God is doing a miracle.



Typically, these jars contained 75-100 litres of water. A large bathtub holds 300 litres. This was not water for drinking but for washing. Ritual purification. The water was used for hand washing and for washing of pots and utensils, Mark 7:4, Matthew 15:2. They were stone, not pottery, as stone could not become impure; it was not porous. These jars were empty.



How much work was it to fill them?

How much wine was made?

The water jars are important. Six stone jars represent the best purification that could be done. Purification is about being right and acceptable before God.

When Jesus causes the water in these newly filled jars to become wine, what is He saying?



The idea here is of a better purification. A better way of being accepted before God. More than what humans can achieve. As in Luke 5:37-39, Jesus is using new wine as a symbol of the gospel.

Why such an extravagant amount?



Someone described this as a scandalous amount of wine.

Wine, in the Bible is associated with joy and celebration, and sometimes with abundance, Genesis 27:28, Psalm 104:14-15, Amos 9:13, Jeremiah 31:12. The image here is of the joy and abundance that Jesus brings.

The water jars were empty. When we reach the end, Jesus has more.



What did Jesus tell the servants to do next?

Did the water change in the jar or the cup?

How do you think the servant felt taking this water-wine to the Master of Ceremonies?

The servants' first act needed work, but not faith. The second needed faith. You could lose your job!

What was the response of the Master of Ceremonies?

'Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.' John 2:10



What does this tell us about the wine?

How do you think the bridegroom felt?

The wine was better than it needed to be. The idea here is that Jesus did something unexpected, something counter-intuitive. Jesus' quality came at an unexpected time. Sudden unexpected provision. Provision in strange places.



Is this still true?

Can you remember a time when God unexpectedly blessed you?

When we are stuck with water, we need to remember that God does wine too,



There are circles of knowledge here,

The servants know where the water comes from, but they don't know how it became wine.

The MC knows it is the best wine, but has no idea where it came from.

The bridegroom has no idea what the master of ceremonies is talking about.

Mary clearly knows more than she is willing to say, but never checks up on the wine.

These issues are never quite resolved.

What do the disciples know?

We assume from the last verse that the disciples witnessed the whole thing. They are the only ones who know the whole story. They are the main audience.

How do you think this event changed the disciples' view of Jesus?

Why didn't Jesus take credit for this miracle?



The Big Meaning

Read Revelation 19:9

What are we invited to?



You will notice how many of Jesus end-time parables centre around a wedding feast. At the time, this was the major eschatological symbol. Once everything has finished, there is a marriage feast. To be invited means to be accepted by God. So the setting gives a hint to the interpretation.

'Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.' Luke 14:15 NIB



In Jewish eschatology of the day, there were two ages. The current age and the age of the Messiah. (Our eschatology is much more complicated)

The current age was the age of the ordinary, the age of weakness, shame, humiliation. Sometimes this was called the age of water. The coming of the Messiah would bring a new age, the age of power, the age of glory and yes, the age of wine.

So what is Jesus saying when when he turns water into wine at a wedding?



He is saying I am bringing the new age, the Messiah has arrived. Perhaps this explains the secrecy. Jesus actions were obvious, but no everybody realised the implications. Jesus was revealed and hidden.