

Jesus Is... #4 The Life-Changer

“On the third day there was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus also was invited to the wedding with his disciples. When the wine ran out, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” And Jesus said to her, “Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you. Now there were six stone water jars there for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water.” And they filled them up to the brim. And he said to them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the feast.” So they took it. When the master of the feast tasted the water now become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then the poor wine. But you have kept the good wine until now.” This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him. After this he went down to Capernaum, with his mother, his brothers & his disciples, & they stayed there for a few days.” (John 2:1-12)

I. The first of 7 signs (Jn. 2:1-11; 4:46-54; 5:1-18; 6:6-13; 6:16-21; 9:1-7; 11:1-45)

- “This, *the first of his signs*, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.” (John 2:11). Jn. 4:54 refers to the *2nd sign* performed in Cana of Galilee (Jn. 4:46, 54).
- The statement this was *the first* of his signs indicates that Jesus did not do any miracles during his child-hood or early manhood (contrary to dozens of apocryphal stories outside the NT). Jesus lived as an ordinary man with his divine identity hidden (cf. Jn. 7:5).
- 7 Signs Pointing to Jesus as the Messiah: In the 1st half of John’s Gospel Jesus demonstrates his messianic identity by way of 7 selected signs (cf. Jn. 20-30-31):

Changing water into wine 2:1-11

Healing the official’s son 4:46-54

Healing the invalid 5:1-15

Feeding the multitude 5,000 6:5-13

Walking on the water* 6:16-21

Healing the man born blind 9:1-7

Raising Lazarus from the dead 11:1-44

*John does not explicitly identify this event as a sign.

- In each of the signs emphasizes the way in which the “sign” reveals Jesus’ messianic character & on the exceptional & striking feat accomplished by Jesus—e.g. the large quantity & high quality of wine (Jn. 2), the official’s son is healed a long distance away by the sheer power of Jesus’ word (Jn. 4), the invalid’s recovery from a 38-year-long ordeal (Jn. 5), the large quantity of food produced by Jesus (Jn. 6), the man’s recovery from lifelong blindness (Jn. 9), and the raising of Lazarus after 4 days in the tomb (Jn. 11).

A. John’s gospel doesn’t use the word, “miracle.” Signs = “attesting miracles” pointing beyond themselves to:

- 1) Jesus as God!
- 2) Jesus’ unique ability to meet our spiritual needs

B. Many are excited about miracles

II. The Wedding at Cana of Galilee (John 2:1-11)

A. Jesus and His family were invited, as well as His disciples (John 2:1-2, 12)

- “On the 3rd day”— This is the *3rd day*—that is, 2 days after Jesus’ encounter with Nathanael (1:43-51). This continues the narration of Jesus’ activities spanning an entire week

- *Cana in Galilee*. Archaeologists focused on the excavation site of Khirbet Kana, 8.3 miles (13 km) north of Nazareth, as the most likely locale for the Roman town of Cana. Excavation reveals substantial quantities of Roman potsherds, confirming Roman-era occupation; it's on the Roman road from Ptolemais to Magdala. ESV

B. The wine ran out (John 2:3)

The wedding party's running out of wine may symbolize the spiritual barrenness of 1st-century Judaism, especially against an OT view that wine (but never drunkenness) as a sign of joy & God's blessing. [ESV] It can also symbolize human joy (in various aspects) running out.

"The disciple group invited with Jesus will have been viewed as his 'family,' for whose contributions Jesus would have been responsible. ...[Perhaps] this motivated Mary's drawing the attention of Jesus to the lack of wine—not that she hoped for a miracle, but that his presence with the disciples... contributed to the embarrassing situation." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, World Biblical Commentary #36, p. 34]

C. Jesus changes water into wine (John 2:6-9a)

1) According to the Father's will – didn't follow Mary's directing.

- "Jesus' address for his mother, "*Woman*," is an expression of polite distance, as is his question to her— "*what does this have to do with me?*" "*My hour has not yet come*"-- In John, Jesus' "*hour*" is the time of his crucifixion, at which time his saving work is accomplished in his atoning death. At this point in his ministry, due to people's misconceptions about the coming Messiah, Jesus doesn't reveal himself openly to Israel (though he performs numerous messianic "signs"). Even this miracle is done quietly. Compared to the other Gospels, John places less emphasis on Jesus' public ministry & more emphasis on his private ministry to specific individuals (example: the Samaritan woman, Jn. 4). [ESV]

2) Servants filled the 6 stone water pots-- Archaeologists have found large goblet-shaped stone storage jars from this period in Jerusalem & elsewhere. These... were lathe-cut from sizable single blocks of stone. [ESV]

3) Servants draw out some water (wine) & take it to master of the feast

4) Very few knew that Jesus had even done anything. Jesus' miracle at Cana was quiet, unobtrusive, "behind-the-scenes," "below-the radar." It was not a spectacular, attention-getting, "grand-standing" spectacle.

- Did the Groom know? Did the wedding guests know?
- Who gets the glory? This miracle showed Jesus' glory as the sovereign Creator & ruler of the material universe & also as the merciful God who provides abundantly for his people's needs [ESV]
- "It surely is significant that the revelation of God's glory in Jesus consists not in a spectacular display of power, but in a quiet, behind-the-scenes work that remained largely unnoticed and impacted only a few. It is in Jesus' humanity that God's glory is revealed.... Though benefitting from Jesus' physical provision, the wedding guests were untouched by Jesus messianic self-revelation." [J. Kostenberger, *John*, p. 99]

III. Six Stone Water Jars for Purification (John 2:6)

A. Jews cleansed themselves with water to come to God under Jewish OT rites of purification:

- In John's "narrative there is an implicit contrast between water used for Jewish purification rites and wine given by Jesus; the former [water] characterizes the old order, the latter [new wine] the new. There can be little doubt that the change... is a sign of the coming of the kingdom of God in and through Jesus." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, World Biblical Commentary #36, p. 36]
- "The gift of wine instead of water was crucially important for the earliest readers of the Gospel. They must grasp the superiority of the Son of God and his gift to the mediator of the old covenant [Moses] and its gifts." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, World Biblical Commentary #36, p. 36]

B. A man-made law

- Rituals, behavior and rules to come to God

C. Jesus says, "Come as you are. Let Me change you."

- Jesus says, "Have a drink."