

Is Jesus Really Superman?

Written by Bill Perkins

Of course, it would be easy to think we could no more follow Jesus' example than we could follow the example of Superman. After all, Jesus was fully God *and* man. I suspect most people figure they could at least try to follow him when he was operating from his human nature. But no way could they follow his lead when he was depending on his divine nature. While we might follow Clark Kent up a flight of stairs, we're not going to follow the man-of-steel when he leaps off a tall building.

A Divine Transformer

Such thinking is based on the belief that Jesus flipped from one nature to the other, like a divine Transformer. While weeping at the grave of Lazarus he utilized his human nature. When raising Lazarus from the dead he flipped into his divine nature. He taught from the human and walked on water from the divine.

I think such a view is inaccurate. At no time during his earthly ministry did Jesus tap into his divine power to know or do anything. Instead, he always operated out of his humanity.

I've heard Bible students say Jesus performed miracles to prove he was God. However, the Bible doesn't tell us that. In fact, in the Old Testament, Moses, Elijah, and Elisha performed miracles. In the New Testament, Paul and Peter also performed miracles. None of these men claimed to be God nor did they say they were the source of such power. Instead, their miracles validated their claim that they spoke for God. And while Jesus did claim to be God (John 10:30-33), he never claimed the power he used to perform miracles came from himself.

He Did Not Lay Aside His Divinity

Regarding the source of Jesus' power and knowledge, Paul made it clear that, while he was fully God, he laid aside all use of his divine attributes when he became a man (Philippians 2:5-8). Paul said he laid aside the use of his divine attributes. He did not lay aside his divinity. That's something he couldn't do. God can't cease being God.

The Source of His Strength

Throughout his ministry Jesus affirmed the source of his strength. In John 5:19-30 Jesus declared his reliance on his Father. He said, "Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even greater works than these, so that you will be amazed" (19-20).

In John 5:30 he said, "By myself I can do nothing." In John 14:9 he told Philip, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." In Matthew 24:36 he showed a human limitation of knowledge when he said he didn't know the time of his return. Later he noted that he could ask his Father for twelve legions of angels for assistance, rather than

commanding them himself (Matthew 26:53).

After the death and resurrection of Jesus, on the Day of Pentecost, Peter spoke of the source of Jesus' power when he said, "Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, *which God did among you through him*, as you yourselves know" (Acts 2:22, italics mine)

The Same Resources Are Yours

This is a profound reality. Why?

Because the same resources **that enabled Jesus to live a life devoted to God are available to you and me.**

We could be men and women who show the world the Father in the same way Jesus did. Yes, Jesus was fully God and fully man. But his words and actions flowed from his Father as could ours. But for that to happen, it's essential we follow his example. And following his example flows from knowing him. And knowing him flows from reading his story.