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Superheroes of the Bible

"By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by faith."
Hebrews 11:7

"The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain...But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord."
Genesis 6:1–9:17

As someone who grew up in a time when TV was only beginning to be a common part of every household, I enjoyed going to the Saturday afternoon movies. I particularly enjoyed the old black and white shorts featuring the superheroes of the day. Initially many of our superhero stories were set in space like Flash Gordon and later they would include Superman.

All cultures have had super heroes. Whether those heroes be knights, or brave adventurers, or majically powerful conquerors we have always wanted to believe in the possibility of some kind of superhero.

I am convinced that our love for superheroes comes from a great desire to believe that somehow, someone will overcome the evil around us, and, since we mere mortals don't quite seem to be able to win this conflict, we hope for someone with super powers to do the job.

Much of the Bible is composed of what we might call superhero stories. These accounts of the lives and struggles of faithful men and women tell the story of how heroic believers were able to serve God and win out against evil forces. Maybe the most striking attribute of these heroes of Scripture as opposed to our modern cultural heroes is that those Biblical heroes were almost always just like us. With few exceptions their victories over evil were not performed through the use of super powers, but through simple hardwork, determination and ultimately, great faith.

One of the first great hero accounts in Scripture is the story of Noah. Noah is a man who lives in a terrible time among a people who have totally and completely turned away from the God of creation. All of the people of the earth in Noah's day are described as ***"...only evil all the time..."*** We like to talk as if our modern world is like the world in Noah's day, but we are not even close to understanding or experiencing that level of evil.

If you can, try to imagine living in a world where every human being is a psychopath and/or a sociopath. There is no compassion, there is no mercy, no empathy, there is no security, and there is no God. And then try to imagine what it would be like to be Noah, living in such a horrible culture, but still choosing to believe in and obey the God of creation.

Having determined that evil has overwhelmed his creation God plans a huge flood to erase all life from his that creation. But Noah, this peculiar, faithful man, finds favor in the eyes of the Lord.

And so, in the midst of his planned destruction, God commands Noah to build an ark. To understand this ark picture a box or barge 450 feet long (A football field is three hundred feet from goal to goal), 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Inside this massive structure build by hand using crude tools are three stories broken into rooms or chambers. Now imagine the workforce available for this project is composed of 4 men and 4 women and the construction site is in the midst of this pervered and twisted society.

Imagine, if you can, that you are Noah leading this bulding effort day after day for one hundred long years, and then as you are nearing completion the animals start showing up. Here they come, two at a time, every living thing from cows to lions, from elephants to salamanders.

And then, there is that fateful day, that day when God commands you to enter the box and he closes the door and the storms come. For forty days and nights all you can hear is the overwhelming roar of destuction, and then it is over. The storms are stilled, the ark floats gently on the deep. For almost another six months your home floats on the surface of the water and then, suddenly, it stops.

Days pass into months, and finally you brave trying to find out what's left. You send out a raven, but it doesn't return. More time passes. You send out a dove and at the end of the day it comes back carrying an olive leaf in its beak.

Through the corse of that year, Noah and his small family were transformed from one small family tryins to survive in a hostile culture to the winners of the first survivors episode. Those eight people, those four couples are all that is left to begin again. They were superheroes!

