Deuteronomy 26:8-10 So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a might hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and miraculous signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that you, O Lord, have given me.” Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before him.

 Heroes and heroines. As a young boy growing up I can remember spending many an afternoon day dreaming of being the hero of some epic drama played out in my mind. Dragons were slain, maidens were rescued and the hero always rode off into the sunset or rather ran off to supper. In truth, sometimes those things were not just day dreams, but rather re-enactments carried out on the hill at the side of our house. It was only years later that our neighbors across the creek, finally told me of how they would sit and be amused by the imaginary play that I was conducting. They told me it was sometimes better than watching TV! Such is the life I had.

 Heroes and heroines are still around. The very number of “super heroes” found in today’s world shows that such dreams are still fueling the imaginations of the world. Today there are quite a few movies that are filled with super heroes but I must confess that I find it amusing that most of the super heroes that are found in the moves are not new but rather just the resurgence of old comic book heroes created in the middle of the last century. Yet still the imagination is fueled.

 In my day the big hero was Superman. For many of you, the hero of the day might have been Heman or perhaps one of the Power Rangers. In my daughter’s childhood, her heroes were the likes of Dora, Rollie Pollie, and Bear in the Big Blue House. Interesting how that changes. If you notice, the idea of heroes really has gone from those with special powers to those who had to develop their powers to those whose power was really just kindness and love. Sometimes campy but still fodder for the minds of kids.

 I’m not particularly interested in the kind of hero or heroine that you imagined yourself to be, however, I would like to ask a question. As you imagined yourself a hero or heroine, as you imagined the victory and how everyone would live happy every after, how did you imagine the people you saved treating you?

 I am going to guess that they treated you as a hero, didn’t they? They cheered and applauded, admired and swooned before you. They rewarded you in hundreds of different ways. The girl the boy saves or the boy the girl saves fell in love forever and ever. The government built statues in your honor and taught all the children for years to come about your deeds and what it meant to be a real American hero. And our needs? Our needs were fully met, as we humbly put forth our requests.

 Heroes and heroines. What a wonderful time of life. Nothing was impossible for our minds to conquer. The mind was free to sore and imagine and truly it was an age of innocence. Today, I believe that innocence to be infringed upon by commercialism. I say that because for many kids, they don’t have imaginations that are free and unhindered, today, all too often, it is the video game that engages them in the dreams of others. It is just interesting, this world of ours.

 You know there are still heroes and heroines in our world. Real life soldiers who put themselves in total danger to save the life of others or to turn the tide of the battle from loss to victory. Policemen and policewomen who put their lives on the line every time they go to work so that this world can have some sense of decency and order and so that evil does not prevail. Heroes and heroines of every kind. But have you ever given thought to the only real and true “super hero” of our world? We don’t think of him as such but truly that just what he is. I’m talking about God. Let’s consider the wonders of God under this theme: **THE REAL HERO OF THE WORLD. 1st. He saved Israel. 2nd. He saves the world. 3rd. Our Response to Him.**

 I take it that you caught the sense of what our text was telling you about. The text is simply a brief outline of all the wonders and miracles that God did for the sake of the children of Israel. The history is utterly fascinating. To think that one nation should have God so graciously and powerfully watch over them. One nation that can speak in its history of God revealing himself and guiding them. That nation is Israel of the Old Testament.

 The children of Abraham had, hundreds of years before our text, been called to serve and learn of the Lord God by the very grace of God. God’s purpose in choosing them was not because these humans were so good and wonderful but rather because God in his goodness and grace wanted to provide the world with a Savior, a Savior to come from these men he had chosen. God’s plan was made clear and this family simply lived with the trust and confidence that God would deliver on his promises.

 And so it was that later on the children of Jacob entered the land of Egypt as welcome guests something God had told Abraham would be. They were welcomed because their brother Joseph, whom they had sold into slavery, was now the second in command of all of Egypt. Such was the plan of God. A plan where God had taken the evil intentions of those brothers and bought it to good. Joseph’s position allowed the children of Israel to survive during the seven year famine that plagued the region. God had worked to save those people.

 Our text speaks of the descendants of those who entered Egypt. They had become a numerous people under the blessings of God. However 300 years after entering Egypt the Egyptians enslaved the people of Israel. Their lives became harsh and horrid. They cried out to the Lord for help and deliverance. So God took steps to deliver them.

 How well we know the story. It begins with God bringing forth and protecting the baby Moses, who would be his first prophet. It tells how Moses under God’s direction brought forth the ten plagues to weaken Egypt. It tells how God won for Israel their freedom through the devastation of the night of Passover. It tells how God lead them, had them cross the sea and how God drowned the army of Pharaoh. God had delivered them from slavery. God had made them a great nation. All that Israel was it owed to God and God alone.

 If you stop and think about it, what a tremendous hero God is. There was nothing special about these people that God should have watched over them, guided and protected them. God took care of them because of his grace, love and mercy. God brought forth his wonders, his promises and his salvation because He desired to. There was nothing in it for God and yet he saved them. And have you ever considered that had God not allowed their enslavement and the harsh treatment they endured, that these people would not have left Egypt for the Promised Land? God works his wonders so that His promises come true. God out of evil can cause good to arise. Truly God is the greatest hero ever.

 However, if you really want to see how much of a hero God is then consider what He has done for the world in His Son Jesus. The world was enslaved by sin, oppressed by Satan and by nature an enemy of God. Even God’s chosen people Israel had lost the substance of the truth that God had given them yet through them, as He had promised, God sent his Son.

 In our Gospel reading we heard of the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness by Satan. The temptation tells us of three of the challenges that Jesus faced. It was really only the beginning of the battle for the souls of the mankind. For the next three years of Jesus’ life, the battle would rage. And it seemed for a while as if Satan was going to win.

 How disheartening is must have been for the disciples to see Jesus hanging on the cross. To them it must have seemed that Jesus had lost the battle he was fighting. They thought He was the Savior, the powerful Son of God and now here was Jesus dying the death of a common criminal. His words, his life…It must have been a lie, they thought.

 But it wasn’t. Once again it was God bringing good out of evil. Jesus, on the cross, was taking care of the greatest need of mankind. Jesus on the cross was taking away the punishment of our sins. He was enduring death and hell on our account, so that we could have the hope of God’s gracious promise of eternal life. It wasn’t defeat that was happening on the cross. It was victory! Sin was being paid for. Mankind was being freed from the power of sin, death and the devil. Our spiritual slavery was being brought to an end because of what Jesus was doing. It was a moment of courage and love such as this world has never seen.

 What looked like defeat was victory. It was our salvation being won. It was confirmed, this victory, when our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead. God and man are now reconciled. Heaven is once again the possibility for mankind, the sure and certain hope for all who believe and trust in Jesus.

 This same God who saved the Israelites from Egyptian slavery and who saved the world from the slavery of sin is still at work today. He is at work in our lives. He works in our lives as we hear the wonderful message of the gospel, that message of Jesus victorious over sin for our sake and salvation. It is through this message of Jesus that we attain the one thing needful for salvation: faith.

 Faith makes the victory of Jesus our victory. Faith leads us to trust and cling to the promises of God’s Word, which is the Bible. Faith assures us that even in the darkest of hours or the deepest of woes, Jesus will deliver us through his power and victory. Faith reminds us that Jesus never lost a single battle or a single soul as he fought to bring salvation to our lives and as he still watches over us.

 What a fantastic hero. As far as I am concerned what Jesus did makes Superman look like an old dog on his last legs. There isn’t an imagined superhero in this entire world that could do what Jesus has done and is doing. His power is supreme. His power is eternal. His salvation is sure and certain for each and every one of us. There are no need for rematches. There is no, “I’ll get you next time!” Jesus won for all time for all.

 Now how do you think we are to respond to this gracious Savior and God? We should cheer and applaud. We should thank and praise. We should simply and in wonder gather together to give him worship. Jesus deserves the greatest of thanks and praise for what he has done. Yet He makes no demands. He offers us his life and truth. He offers us His Holy Spirit and redemption. He offers us His love.

 Heroes and Heroines? No, just one hero. A real superhero. The Lord Jesus Christ. Let us thank and praise, serve and believe in him. Let us be his stewards in all that we have and are. Praise be to Jesus who has poured his love upon us that we might overflow with his love. God help us in this. Amen.