



[Teacher's Note: In preparing these four messages, I relied heavily on a variety of theology books, articles and websites for insight, structure, and content. While I have sought to synthesize and present the material clearly, many ideas and formulations come from the works of others. I want to give credit where credit is due. Please see the "Sources Cited" document included in this resource to find all the resources I used in preparing these messages.]

[Teacher's Note: I begin each message in this series with a first-person narrative to try to draw students into what we are talking and to attempt to make the Bible come to life. It's important that you do not say anything when you get up to teach unless it's the beginning of the narrative. You want to try to have students feel like they are there.]

There I stood, staff in hand, the wind whipping around us as if nature itself held its breath. The sound of Pharaoh's chariots grew louder behind us—the pounding of hooves and the grinding of wheels like a storm bearing down. Before me, the waters of the Red Sea stretched wide and deep, an impossible barrier. Behind me, a sea of faces—my people—filled with terror and doubt.

"Moses!" they cried. "Why did you bring us here? Were there not enough graves in Egypt? Their voices trembled with despair, and I felt the sharp edge of their fear pressing against me.

I turned to the heavens. "Lord," I whispered, "what shall I do?" And then, the answer came in the quiet certainty of His command: "Tell the people of Israel to go forward. Lift up your staff, stretch out your hand over the sea, and divide it."

With trembling hands, I obeyed. I raised my staff high, stretching my hand over the waters. A mighty wind arose, fierce and unrelenting. It tore through the sea, splitting them in two. Before our eyes, dry ground appeared, the waters standing like walls on either side.

"Go!" I shouted to the people. "Go forward, the Lord fights for us!"

At first, there was hesitation. Who had ever seen such a thing? But then, the first steps were taken, and soon the multitude followed. I stood at the edge, watching them go. The Lord's presence was there, standing guard behind us, keeping Pharaoh's army at bay.

Finally, I stepped onto the path, walking where moments before there had been only deep waters. Each step was an act of faith, each breath a prayer of thanks. The walls of water towered beside us, shimmering and alive, held back by the power of the Almighty.

As the last of our people reached the far shore, I turned and saw the chariots of Egypt charging into the sea. I could feel the fear of the people rising again, but the Lord spoke once more: "Stretch out your hand, Moses, over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians."

I lifted my staff again, stretching my hand over the sea. The water collapsed with a thunderous roar. The sea returned to its place, covering all of Pharaoh's army. Not one of them remained.

A hush fell over us as we stood on the far shore, watching the waves settle. The silence was broken by a single voice, then another, and another, rising in a song of praise. We couldn't help but join in with the song, *Exodus 15:11 ESV "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?"*

Tears were streaming down my face as I joined in the song. The Lord had done what no man could do. He had delivered us. And so, we journeyed on, the Red Sea behind us and the promise of God before us.

PAUSE

In Exodus 15:11, Moses made one of the most glorious statements about God that is found in the Bible coming off a huge event in the biblical narrative. Moses' belief and trust in God allowed for the people of Israel to be saved from the wrath of Pharaoh's army. What Moses believed about God at that moment mattered. What we believe about God matters.

Tonight, we're starting a four-week series called, "Theology 101: What We Believe About God Matters." In this series, we'll be talking about theology. We're going to go deep into the pages of Scriptures and learn precious



ICEBREAKER – What is your favorite winter activity?

1. What is one thing that stood out to you from tonight's message?
2. Thinking about God's omnipresence, omnipotence and omniscience...
 - a. What are some ways you experience God's power?
 - b. What are some ways you experience God's will and God's wisdom?
 - c. What are some ways you experience God's presence?
3. Why does studying the doctrine of God (Theology Proper) matter for our faith and daily lives?
4. How does the holiness of God influence the way we approach Him in worship?
 - a. What are practical ways we can cultivate a deeper sense of awe and reverence in our worship?
5. What attributes of God do you find most challenging to understand or explain?
 - a. How does grappling with these truths strengthen your faith?
6. What are some practical ways that God's character and nature changes the way you worship, share the gospel and pray?

Close in prayer.



[Teacher's Note: I begin each message in this series with a first-person narrative to try to draw students into what we are talking and to attempt to make the Bible come to life. It's important that you do not say anything when you get up to teach unless it's the beginning of the narrative. You want to try to have students feel like they are there.]

I had faced danger before. I had seen criminals fight, men beg for mercy, and others curse their fate. But nothing prepared me for that night—the night the earth shook, and my life nearly ended.

I was the jailer in Philippi, responsible for keeping the prisoners locked away. Failure was not an option. If a prisoner escaped under my watch, I would pay with my life. I had seen it happen to others, and I would not let it happen to me.

That night, I locked the prisoners in as usual. Among them were two men, Paul and Silas. I had heard rumors about them, preachers of some foreign god, arrested for causing trouble. But they were different. They didn't curse or beg. They prayed. They sang hymns. In the darkness of my prison, their voices carried hope. It was unsettling. Then, it happened.

A violent earthquake struck the prison. The ground heaved beneath me. Stones crumbled. The walls groaned. I scrambled to my feet, heart pounding. I rushed to the cells and my worst fear became reality. The doors were open. The chains lay empty. They were gone.

Panic seized me. I knew what this meant. My career—my life—was over. There would be no trial, no second chance. Better to die by my own hand than suffer disgrace and execution. I drew my sword. But before I could strike, a voice rang out. *"Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!"*

I froze. It sounded like Paul's voice. I grabbed a torch and ran to the cells, barely able to believe it. They were still there. None of the prisoners had fled. It made no sense. Shaking, I fell to my knees before Paul and Silas.

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

I didn't mean saved from punishment; I meant something deeper. I had heard of their God, but now I knew He was real. He had shaken the very foundations of my prison, and of my soul. Paul answered simply, *"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."* That night, everything changed.

I took Paul and Silas to my home. I washed their wounds, and they told my family about this Jesus. We listened, we believed, and before the night was over, we were baptized.

The jail I once guarded no longer held me captive. The fear that ruled my life was gone. Joy replaced it. I was no longer just a Roman jailer. I was a free man; saved, not by my sword, but by the grace of God.

PAUSE

That night, the gospel made an eternal difference in the life of that jailer and his family in Phillippi. We shouldn't be surprised; the gospel always makes an eternal difference. The jailer and his family received salvation. They were saved. That is what we're talking about tonight. The doctrine of salvation, which is also called the doctrine of Soteriology.

Please turn in your Bibles to Romans 3:20-31. We're in a series called, "Theology 101: What We Believe About God Matters" and it mattered what the jailer believed that night. It literally was the difference between an eternity in hell or an eternity in heaven. It's the same for you. It's the same for everyone. What we believe about God matters, now and for eternity.

Big Idea: "Salvation is not about what we do; it's about who we believe in."

Just like the Philippian jailer, we are all in need of rescue, and true freedom comes only through faith in Jesus Christ. Before we go any further, I want you to hear this: salvation is not complicated. It's not about doing enough good things, fixing yourself first, or following a long list of rules.

The gospel is simple: *Jesus died for your sins, He rose from the dead, and He offers you new life.*