

Neglecting So Great a Salvation

Hebrews 2:1-4, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

Father, again we praise You for Your goodness in bringing us to Your word, bringing us to this passage, for bringing us to the passage that You would have us to deal with as a church. Your wisdom, Your mercy, we ask that You would help us to hear it and give us hearts to understand. That we would not be as so many in the past and so many that we have even seen that You have set as examples even in our lifetime so that we would fear that we would follow after You and not have our minds fixed on the things of the earth. We ask then that You would help us to heed those things, that You would help us to heed Your word now and have our minds on the things of heaven. Please be with Mr. Horn as he preaches. Give him the words to speak and give us the ears to hear. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

As we return to Hebrews this morning, after finishing the first nine plagues of Exodus and we hear the declaration of the tenth plague, hear what's going to come of Pharaoh. God has us now in this passage. As we think about this passage, as we consider this passage, we should just think about what a great salvation we have received. The writer of Hebrews put in the context of Hebrews what Paul does in most of his letters. After declaring some theology, he turns around and says this is what the response should be. In chapter 1, the argument was made that even though God had spoken before, even though God had given revelation earlier, He spoke in different ways, He spoke through prophecy, He spoke through poetry, He spoke through proverb, He spoke through the historical book. If He spoke in that way, how much more did He speak through His Son? How much more clarity was there in the gospel of Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ has spoken now through His Son that we can understand all these things that were in shadows, we can understand all these things that the Old Testament saints, even the angels desired to understand. After the coming of Christ we can see and understand these things. This One who was God, who was with God, He became lower than the angels, but even so He had greater joy because He loved righteousness and He hated lawlessness. This is who Christ is, He loves righteousness and He hates lawlessness and He died to deliver us from lawlessness and to deliver us to righteousness. That's why Jesus Christ died on the cross. He was and is and always will be. He is the One through whom all things were made, He is the One who created the world for His purposes and for Himself and He's also the One that's seated at the right hand of the Father making all His enemies His footstool. As we consider who Christ is, when we consider what Christ has done, let's remember He did it so that we could inherit salvation. As we think about it, as we think about who Christ is, as we consider the magnitude of what He did, that directly should impact how we think of our own salvation and how we think of

our own salvation is supposed to direct and instruct us how we are to live our lives moment by moment. The writer of Hebrews says He appointed all the angels, this is how serious He takes salvation. The purpose of these angels, these heavenly beasts, is to minister to those who will receive salvation. Then the writer of Hebrews comes and says this is what the response to understanding that should be. Just like as we think about the writer of Hebrews, this is also the response as we think of going through these plagues. We see the destruction that came upon Egypt, as we see the misery, as we see the suffering, as we see all these pictures that are just a small foretaste of what hell is like, our response to that should be exactly the same as what our response is to Hebrews 1. How can we neglect that salvation? How can we just drift off and ignore the importance of being saved? If you think of the judgements in Egypt as God gave us these various pictures of hell and we think of the miseries of those who do not escape the judgement, how much more should we take diligent heed to make sure we don't just drift away? Our response to seeing the picture of judgement should be to remember that every transgression will receive it's just reward. If this is what God did to people who didn't even have the law, what will He do to people who have the full revelation, even Jesus Christ coming in the flesh? If this is just reward, just recompense for the sin of Egypt, what is just for our suffering? For our sin? What will be just for God to do to us? This is what He did to those who did not receive the revelation through angels. The plagues are supposed to remind us of the same things that Hebrews 1 reminds us of, don't neglect your salvation. Don't consider it a minor thing, a sideline of your life. That's now what Jesus Christ died for, He died to make you a servant of His, just like the Israelites were delivered to go serve Him in the wilderness. That's the same thing Jesus Christ died for, to take us out of the camp of humanity so we could go serve Him. As we consider it from the Mosaic side, thinking of the ministry of death, we should respond going, 'Think how significant our salvation is.' If we look at the mercy of Christ we should see how significant our salvation is. All these things should point us to what these verses are saying, they are saying what our response should be whether it's to the first eleven chapters of Exodus or whether it's the response to the first chapter of Hebrews, the response should be to take heed, understand what happens.

Verse 1, "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." Remember, the writer of Hebrews is saying "Therefore", this is what the response should be to the idea that "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." Think about that, think of what Christ did because when we think how He was the Father, He made the world, and everything is about Him yet He took on flesh, was under the law, let sinful wicked men kill Him so we could be saved. Understand what the response should be because of who Christ is, because of what He has done, and because of the position He has because He has sat at the right hand of the Father, He is ruling on high. Because of these realities we have a real duty to respond. We can't just go, 'Well, I made a profession of faith, God should be happy I walked the aisle, God should be happy with the fact

that I said I believed in Jesus Christ.' Really? That's what, if you are king of the universe, if you are ruling over all things and you take on flesh and let wicked people beat you and mock you, and kill you, all you should get out of that is people saying they believe in Jesus Christ? He came to redeem a people, He didn't come to get words. He came to redeem a people, to buy a people out of slavery so that they could serve Him. So "we must give the more earnest heed." This is not something that can be considered optional. The word translated 'must' means we are bound that way. Not that we should make the choice, that's not what the word is saying, it's saying because of who Christ is and because of what He did, therefore we have this obligation, this duty that we will be judged against. This is not an optional desire whether we heed it or not. If you are saved, this is what you have been bound to do just like you were bound to be a slave to sin, now you are bound to take heed to your salvation, "to the things we have heard." If we understand who Christ is, if we understand what the plagues in Egypt are like, this will be the response, this is what we have now been bound to do, to give more earnest heed. That translation sounds like we are supposed to constantly be giving more significant heed like we are supposed to be increasing it, but that's not literally what it means. It means we are to be giving an abundance of attention to these things at all times. It's not like when you are saved you give a little heed and the longer you are saved, the more heed you give to it. No, we are always, at all times, we have a duty and a responsibility to give heed to the things that we have heard. We are bound to give an abundance of attention to our salvation. What things do you give attention to? How much attention do you give to the word of God compared to the things of the world? Some of those things it's easy to give attention to might be good things, giving attention to your children is not a bad thing, but if you give attention to your children and sacrifice giving attention to the word of God so you can give attention to your children, it has now become a bad thing because you are commanded, you are bound if you are saved so pay attention, to think about, to consider what God has told you. David is the example that we are supposed to be following where he says night and day he meditated on the word of God. That is the picture of someone giving abundant heed, abundant attention to his salvation. This is someone who was a man after God's own heart. This is what we are supposed to be doing. When Jesus Christ said those who are lukewarm, He vomits them out of His mouth, understands lukewarmness is to make a profession and walk away from what God says. It's also to come to church every week to hear the preaching of the word, to be confronted by your sin and walk away and do nothing, to be the man who looks at his face in the mirror then walks away and ignores it. That's also to be lukewarm. We have to have a zeal for these things, we have to give abundance of attention to these things. Are the words of God the focus of your life? If you understand how great your salvation was, that will become the focus of your life and understand there are so many things in this world that want to take that away from you so that's not the focus of your life. And that's what God is warning about in this verse. We have to give attention to the things that we have heard. When we think of the plagues in Egypt, when we think of the vast destruction that came upon that country and then we think how little revelation they had, they didn't have any word of God, they just had the twisted truth after the fall that was in their heart, but they still had a conscience that accused them. Pharaoh still said he was wicked and the people were wicked. He still knew enough to be condemned. Undoubtedly Joseph had said some things to the Egyptians when he was a ruler in the kingdom. They didn't remember Joseph, but looked at how God judges them for how little they had heard. As we

think of that plague where they are in darkness and they can't rise from their place for three days, that's the judgement God says was fit for them with the revelation that they had, with the things that they had heard. Consider how much more revelation we have, consider how much more testimony we have through the word of God, how much more testimony we have of the last 2,000 years of the church. Consider how much greater of an example of righteousness and how the right application of the law is in Jesus Christ. If that's what God did to the Egyptians, what will God do to you who have heard and don't pay earnest attention? What would you expect God to do to you which would be just? We know God is just, would it be just for God to hold you to a higher standard or hold you to a lower standard than the Egyptians? Not just you, but your neighbor who does not know Christ or go to church, he has heard much more revelation than the Egyptians. Understand he will be held to a much stricter judgement because he has far more testimony of what righteousness is than the Egyptians did. As you think of the plagues, make sure you understand the judgement to come is a lot worse for people now than in Egypt because we have heard so much more. Are you giving abundant attention to things? As you come week by week, as you read the Scriptures in your home, as you talk about them in your family, is it to the side of your life? Do you read the Bible with your family in the morning so you check it off your list and go off and pursue the world for the next 23 hours? Is that what your attitude is towards the word of God? If so, that's the opposite of what the writer of Hebrews is saying. He is saying this has to be what you think about, what you consider as you go through your life. Or here's what happens, "lest we drift away." You drift away. Anybody who was here at the time of the Hope church split, you saw this, you saw deacons that didn't give abundant attention and they drifted away and the church did a really bad job. I as their elder did a horrible job about confronting them in their sin, but it's important for us to not pretend like this isn't something that happens. Most of the people here saw this happen, they could see it with their eyes, people didn't give abundant attention and they seemed so faithful so they were appointed to roles of honor in the church and yet they still drifted away. This happens all the time. This is the thing that we are to look about when you see people leave the church. This is what you are to think about, if they are just not willing to give abundant attention to the things that they have heard so it's easier to give more attention to the things of the world. They say they are a Christian, but you look back 5, 10 years later and there's no testimony of it in their life, that is what God says will happen. Don't pretend like it's not what happens, it happens all the time. Having been in the church for something like 30 years, I've seen it over and over and over and over and over again. I have no reason standing here this morning to think that some of you won't be in that category because every church I have ever been in, there have been people in that category. So don't just walk away and say those plagues in Egypt were terrible things, understand and do not ignore what salvation is. Do not ignore the significance of salvation because you drift away, you think they aren't important things and that they are just minor things, but one after another and soon you are so far from the gospel that you have no hope. This is a picture of Matthew 4:18-19, "And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." All they do is instead of focusing on what they have heard, instead of focusing on how great a salvation they received is, they just start letting the world take their attention away. This is what it looks like to drift away, they let the world take the attention away. They go, 'I just have so many children to

take care of, we will just skip devotions today, we won't have the focus on the word of God today.' It doesn't say in Matthew that it's going to be the love of the world that distracts you, no, it's going to be legitimate things that you say are good for you to do and they will distract you because instead of giving abundant attention to the word of God to what you have heard, you start to give attention to the things of the world. Again, it can be good things, but understand how easy it is to drift away. The deceitfulness of riches, you start to say your problems would be solved if you just had more money. People start to pursue money and then other things and soon that word is choked out. That's the same picture here, that's the same picture of this drifting away. It's the picture of a boat. Unless you are anchored to the things that you hear, unless you are tied up to it or bound to it, unless you have docked yourself on the words that God has said and you make sure that's tied firmly and soundly, there's always a current that's taking you away, always, at all times. It's really easy to say, 'But this is just a season and in the next season I will do better.' Don't kid yourself, the current is always without exception, trying to take you away. There is never a time that the world is not trying to move you away from the commandments of God. So often it does it with good things, it's the priority that matters. It's important that you see the world that way, it's important that you see the world as this force that's constantly trying to move you away from the Word of God.

Verses 2-3, "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him." "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast." This word spoken through angels is probably specifically referring to the giving of the law in the Old Testament. That word translated 'through' actually is 'dia', which means through, but can also mean 'in the midst of', 'among', and this is how God gave Moses the law. We tend to think of it as God is with Moses, Joshua is also there we know, so Moses and Joshua are standing there and it's just the three of them there on top of the mountain, but that's not what the Bible says. Deuteronomy 33:1-2, "Now this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. And he said: "The Lord came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of saints; From His right hand Came a fiery law for them." Moses wasn't just up there with God, there were 10,000 saints now and clearly we know what humans were up there. It was Moses and Joshua, the elders of Israel went up and they were so afraid that they said they would stand far off and the two of them go on up ahead. So these saints are angels, saints means 'holy ones'. These are 10,000 holy ones that were with God when God gave Moses the law. So the word was spoken, not through angels like it was spoken in the midst of angels. God gave the law to Moses surrounded by 10,000 witnesses, that's how the law was received. That's the same it says in Galatians 3:19, "What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator." This is the picture of what happened there, it was appointed in the midst of angels by the mediator. This was the pre-incarnate Christ on Sinai giving the law to Moses surrounded by 10,000 saints, by 10,000 angels. So these are the same angels that are in the previous chapter as the writer of Hebrews said in 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" The giving of the law was part of that

ministry where they were ministering to those who would inherit salvation. The law is the tutor that leads to Christ as it says in Galatians. So the law was given in the midst of angels and that law was proven steadfast. All of the Old Testament afterwards is really commentary on the law. The historical books, they're testimony of how God enforced the law over and over again. The children of Israel rebelled and they were judged by God. They were put out and conquered by the Philistines, they were conquered by the Ammonites, they were conquered by all different kinds of people and they would humble and repent then God would give them victory. That's the book of Judges, over and over again that happens. That's the story of the historical books, if you disobey the law of God as a nation, you should expect judgement. But the wisdom books like Proverbs, that's taking the law to very personal applications. My son, don't walk on the street where the harlot is, that's just an application of the law. The prophets are saying because you are not obeying the law, the wrath of God is going to come upon you. When Isaiah goes nation after nation after nation, that's his message, you won't obey the law so God is going to judge. The whole thing is there is a just reward for transgressions. The Old Testaments is about "every transgression and disobedience received a just reward." Not that there weren't times where there weren't declarations that a Messiah would come to deliver them, but the primary thrust of the Old Testament was that every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. God sent the law because of transgression. The law points out why God judges and how He judges and how to avoid His judgement. When we see the law of God we can understand that there is justice in this world. It's really easy for us to look around and see the world being unjust, but if you look there are real consequences to sin. God puts consequences to sin all over the place. The adulterer destroys his marriage and has misery. The drunkard has all kinds of physical effects, the sodomite the same. God put real judgements and you can understand when you have the revelation of God of what is righteous. You can look at the world around you and you can see that God is a just God. And yes, we recognize that there are some people who don't seem to get the just judgement that they deserve, but they will in eternity. So every transgression, that word means every time that you do something that is against God's commandments. Every transgression will receive a just reward, but it's not just that. That word translated 'disobedience' really means 'inattentiveness'. So not only if you go out there and sin do you receive this just reward, but it is just for God when you don't give abundant attention to the things that you have heard, it is just for God to just let you drift away, that's the judgment. You just drift away, you leave the things of God because it's inattentiveness that receives a just reward. I mean, you see this testimony in David's life, he's inattentive to his children. Look at how many problems he causes because he won't judge Absalom for the rape of his daughter. Don't just think that you don't look at your life and see a bunch of great sins, but if you are just inattentive to the gospel and the things God has commanded you to do, God says you will receive a just reward for that as well. How many times have you done something that you shouldn't have done? Think about it, how many times have you done something that you shouldn't have done, that you knew from God's word that you shouldn't have done it? Realize that every single one of those times deserves every plague that came upon Egypt. Not just that, but how many times have you failed to do something that you knew you should have done? How many times have you failed to tell someone the gospel when you should have spoken the gospel to them? How many things have you failed to do that God told you to do? If you're honest with yourself, the answer will be way more than you can count. They're way more than I

can count for myself and understand every idle word is brought into judgement, so when we think about that law and every transgression, every time we do something contrary to the word of God deserves a just reward and every time we think we were inattentive to something we should have been paying attention to, we will receive a just reward. We have a much greater idea of the salvation that God has given us because every one of those deserved His wrath, every one of those deserved all the plagues of Egypt. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation"? Obviously we know there is only one way and that's to flee to Christ, that's the only way to not receive those just wages for our sin. The only way is through the blood of Jesus Christ. Unless we have died with Him, there is no escaping the judgement of the law for God is just and all-powerful so there is no escaping His wrath unless He put it on His Son in your place. There's no other way to escape that just reward. When I read the word 'escape', I tend to think of that in that it can be in a passive or active sense. Like we escaped the worst of the pandemic. There's nothing we did, but we escaped it. I know, the governor is saying we did a lot, but I'm sorry, this doesn't match the science. The science is that none of the stuff mattered at all, it had the normal curve that it always has. But we can say we escaped the epidemic that was in America and that's just something passive, but that's not the word here. The word here is 'ekfugo', which literally means 'to flee out of'. This means that you are running out of it so how can you run out of this judgement? This isn't you just passively sitting there thinking the judgement won't happen. If that's your thinking, then judgement is going to happen. The only way you can escape it is that you have to actively flee. You're neglecting that great salvation if you're not considering things seriously, you're acting like Lot. Lot is saying it would be good to save his married daughters, it would be good to save my son in law, it would be good to bring those people out and the angel finally grabs him by the hand and says to flee now or you will receive the destruction. The writer of Hebrews is saying the same thing, make sure you're fleeing. It's so easy for us to get caught up in the cares of the world so we drift away because Lot would have been destroyed except for the mercy of God that He sent an angel to drag him by the hand out of the city. Don't neglect it, don't just say you're fine because you made a profession of faith or because you go to a radical church so your salvation is secure. No. If you're not giving abundant attention to the things that you have heard, your salvation is not secure and the world is pushing you to drift off. Neglect literally means to be careless, to not care about it. If you're not giving attention to it, you're not caring about it so you won't escape the wrath of God. If you don't care about it you won't give attention to it so you will not escape the wrath of God. You have to actively flee to Christ as it says in Romans 8:13, "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live." Either you are dying or you're working to put to death the deeds of the body. Either you are paying attention to the things that God has said, the things you have heard from God, or you are dying. There's no passivity in Christianity. We're either putting to death by the Spirit the deeds of the body or those deeds are killing us. There's no case where you can say it's safe for you to neglect it. So I want us to ask the question, how do we neglect so great a salvation? I have a list here and I'm sure I've missed things too so don't take my list and say you don't need to think about it because I said it. No, ask yourself how you're neglecting it. I've thought of ways people neglect it so make sure you don't neglect to think about how you're neglecting it. The first is not wanting to know what transgression and disobedience are. If you don't want to know what God says about a subject you're not paying attention to it or acting like it matters. You're

not acting like every act of transgression and disobedience will receive a just reward. If you don't ask what God says about a matter, you're being careless, you don't care at all whether you are sinning or not. If you neglect the word of God you don't care and if you don't care, you're not going to escape the plagues of Egypt, you're not going to escape the destruction to come. If you're not reading His word, as it said in Peter, if you don't desire the word like a baby desires its mother's milk, then you're neglecting your salvation. Don't neglect your salvation. Those who are fleeing from transgression, they want to know what they should be fleeing from. Those who are trying to put to death the sins of the body, they want to know what the sins are. The next one is not wanting wisdom and understanding from God. We're neglecting our salvation when we're just reading His word but not desiring wisdom, not crying out to God for wisdom. He promises in James that all who seek Him are not double minded, all who seek Him with a real desire not to neglect their salvation, He will give them wisdom. A lot of times we read the word, but we don't see where we are neglecting it. It's so easy for us to pass over our transgressions when we read the word of God, to pass over where we are inattentive to something we should be doing so we should be crying out to God to convict us of our sin, to show us if we truly want to know what to flee from. We have to cry out to God to show us what to flee from in our life, show us where our sins are. Another way we neglect so great a salvation is we make provisions for the flesh and we don't structure things in our lives, when we are not working to control our body and our thoughts and our desires, those things are working to take us captive to sin. If we're not fighting against it, that's what will happen. You're neglecting your salvation if you're not protecting yourself from sin, if you're not prepared to flee youthful lusts. It's like Proverbs, as we went through Proverbs it seemed really repetitive as I was preaching it because he says it so many times. If you're a young man, don't walk on the streets where the harlots are, that's what he says over and over again because of how stupid we are that he has to say it over and over and over again. But do you know you may not be tempted by a harlot, but you're tempted by some sin. Do you know the ways that you walk so you can stop it? Make no provision for the flesh! That's what it means and if you don't care enough so that you keep walking on the road to the harlot, don't say you don't know why you keep stumbling to that sin. Yes you do, you're neglecting the salvation of God, that's why. If you make provisions for the flesh, you don't set up guards, if you don't make sure you're not going in the path of where you stumble, you're being incredibly careless about your salvation. If we don't declare it to others we are neglecting so great a salvation. If we say this is about me and all we care about is me and if we don't shine forth the light of God and speak to others about it, we're not saying it matters that much. If you're standing by the edge of the pool and you see someone right there that's drowning and you don't reach down and grab their hand, you can't say that you care about life because you don't. If you see people that are going to hell and you won't say anything to them about it, you can't say that you care about the judgement because you don't. Neglecting salvation is also about not caring enough about your neighbor to not say anything. That means you don't think it's the pearl of great price that it's worth selling everything to obtain. If you did, you would say to your neighbor to sell everything to obtain it, you can obtain it too. Another way we neglect so great a salvation is that we don't worship God. Our salvation, our redemption was provided so we could escape the judgement to serve God. If we're not serving God and working to be a faithful servant of God we are being inattentive to the things that God says are important. We're acting like we're not saved to something and just saved from something. We

are saved to something and this is critically important because if you think that salvation is only half of what it is, are you neglecting it? Of course you are. If somebody was making dinner and they're supposed to make four dishes and they only make two of them, you say the neglected dinner. Well, if you're only doing half, if you're only watching out for making sure that you're rescued from sin, but you're not asking what you should do to serve, you're neglecting the salvation because that's only half of it. Those are individual things, but I also want to talk about how churches can neglect so great a salvation because not only can we neglect it individually, we can also neglect it as a group. If the church is more concerned about pleasing its members than pleasing God, it's neglecting so great a salvation, it's not caring about it, it's treating salvation as a worthless thing. Just like individuals, they either tie themselves solemnly to the gospel so they can withstand the current, or churches can do the same thing and they just drift. They start saying that people will be uncomfortable if they preach that abortion is murder. You can know where that church will be in ten years because the world pushes on the church just like it pushes on individuals. Churches drift too. Understand how easy it is to make those choices. As soon as a church gets a mortgage, it's guaranteed that it will have to make those kinds of choices, it does because you have to be careful what you say or you may not be able to pay the mortgage. There's other things that push the leadership in that direction, they just want applause from the world, Jesus Christ said if you love Him the world will hate you because it hated Him. There are churches that say, 'Look! I have all these people and I want to add more people', and they go the same direction. How many pastors have fallen over the last ten years because they started out with what appeared to be sound, but then they started to get applause then they drifted away and they took their church with them, drifting away. Let's make sure as a church we're not trying to please the world, not trying to please individuals; we are trying to please God because that's how we say salvation is significant, salvation is the most valuable thing. Another way that can seem so righteous is that they can be more concerned with their ministry than they are about worship. They can be more concerned about doing good things, we can be more concerned about taking care of those who have lost limbs in Nigeria than we are about worship, in which case we are neglecting the salvation. It's bad in many ways that the accounting is not up to date in Nigeria, but it's more important that pastors be preached to about the true gospel than it is the accounting. We need to make sure that we're not neglecting the worship, even in our ministry, that we are calling people to worship because that's far more important than these secondary things, even replacing limbs for people. That has to be secondary to worshipping God. They desired greatly to minister to people, to care for the poor, and now they're just a social club that cares for the poor. If it's not about worship, then it's neglecting salvation. We can even be focused as a church on good things, but it's so easy for us to neglect things that are so important. God saved us and delivered us so we could go out in the wilderness and worship Him. The last thing I'm going to mention is that churches can neglect to do church discipline. This is one of the most common ways the church neglects so great a salvation. When you say this person can walk in an unholy manner in the midst of the church and you don't do anything about it, you don't think there is a just reward, you don't think it matters. This is one of the easiest ways because it's so hard. It is hard to do church discipline. As an elder when you do church discipline, you always go into it thinking there's a good chance the church will split over this. Even as I was in Nigeria and speaking in Zingak's church, I had no idea the church was at a point of almost splitting because they did church discipline on a

member who had been a member for decades. This is what happens so it's hard as an elder, as a pastor, it's hard to do church discipline because it's hard to bring everybody along, but yet a church that neglects salvation. As a church we need to be making sure we are not neglecting so great a salvation. This is what we have heard and we need to make sure we are not ignoring it and inattentive to it. Instead make sure we ask ourselves the question, how are we supposed to apply this? "Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." Before Jesus Christ started His public ministry, the Sadducees and Pharisees were viewed as these great spiritual leaders. The Sadducees had all the positions of prominence, the Pharisees had large swaths of Scripture memorized. They were the keepers of the wisdom of God and here comes Jesus Christ and He flips it all on its head to the point where these religious leaders only wanted to murder Him and they plot together, they're willing to speak together about how they should kill Him. Those that He gave a gift to hear, even though they stumbled in many ways, they were still willing to lay down their lives for the gospel when Jesus said He must go to Jerusalem. John 11:6, "So, when He heard that he was sick, He stayed two more days in the place where He was." They weren't neglecting. From the first where Christ spoke about it, the first ones that He spoke to, they were saying they were willing to lay down their lives for the gospel. They weren't neglecting Christ. From the first there were people that were willing to lay down everything and give it the attention it deserves. "And was confirmed to us by those who heard Him." The same gospel that was spoken first by Christ, obviously aspects of it were spoken well before Christ took on flesh and dwelt among us. In Genesis 3, it talks about how the serpent's head will be crushed. I think this is tying back to Hebrews 1 where this is Christ coming and speaking to the people. These are the people who heard Him and it was confirmed by us who heard Him. People took His message that He had spoken to His disciples and others and they passed that message onto others. Salvation was first declared by Christ then it was declared by those who heard Him. The word translated 'confirm' is really a derivative of that word 'steadfast' in verse 1. Just like the word that was spoken through the midst of these angels which proved steadfast, the word spoken in the midst of the church through these saints proves to be steadfast. The first was given by angelic saints and the second is given by human saints, but the word is still given. The gospel is still given and proven steadfast because it's given in the midst of the holy ones. That's still how the gospel is spread and how we are to spread the gospel, from those who heard and believed to other people who then hear and believe. As Paul said in Romans 1:16-17, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'The just shall live by faith.'" It is confirmed in other people is why the next people hear it and see it and are transformed by it and they tell other people that this is how the gospel will go forth. This is how it was going forth at the time the writer of Hebrews wrote and that's how it's going forth now.

Verse 4, "God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" So He has the people bearing witness, but it's not just the people bearing witness, it's also God bearing witness. The people have a responsibility, if you have heard the good news, you have the responsibility to testify about it to other people because this is the normative pattern. It's transmitted from faith to faith. The righteousness of God is revealed from one person of faith to another person then they then

have faith. It comes from the proclamation of the word, but also from the conviction of God. "God also bearing witness." Christ said of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-11, "And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe in Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged." The Holy Spirit is still here and still bearing witness today. "Both with signs and wonders." With signs we think of the leper being cleansed and the lame walking, but that word 'sign' there just means 'mark', It can be something miraculous and so often we want something spectacular, but that's not what the word really means. It means you can see it, there's a mark there, there's a sign of it. The way He bears witness with signs is that you can see when somebody is saved. You can see that their life is different. So often we want to see a sign in heaven, the stars fall. No, the sign is that someone who was angry and hate-filled becomes someone that loves. That's the mark and that's what's happening all around us. God is bearing witness by changing people so you can see that they are different. The sign that God gives of the gospel is that He makes people meek, He breaks their pride, He causes them to show love when before they were self-centered. This is the mark of the gospel, is God said you will know them by their love for one another. This is the mark, it's love that's the mark. One of the ways that God continues to witness with signs today is that there are people who will lay down their lives, even for their enemies. There are people like Stephen who when he was being stoned, he prayed for the people that were stoning him and asking God to forgive them because they know not what they do. That's the mark and that still happens. Understand, it's so easy for us to go, 'What a great sign, what a great wonder that a leper is now cleansed!' The lepers, when Jesus Christ cleansed the ten lepers, nine of them went away and didn't do anything, they didn't even thank Jesus for cleansing them. Is that a greater sign because a year later they're not going to be telling people they used to be a leper, so is that a greater sign? Or is it a greater sign that someone who was angry and bitter now becomes loving and everybody around them says he is completely different and that he speaks of the gospel? Which is the greater sign? We need to understand it's not a greater miracle when someone gets healed of a disease, it's a greater sign when God takes a heart of stone and makes it a heart of flesh. That's a much greater sign. What's a greater sign, Paul's' life after conversion or a blind man seeing? As you read the gospel's, as you read the book of Acts, as you read Paul's epistles, which is the greater sign? Is it Paul or the guy who was blind that Jesus anointed with saliva and with mud? There's no question the greater mark is Paul. Understand God is still witnessing with signs, and with wonders. The word translated 'wonders' is 'teras'. This has an unknown origin and every place in the Scripture it's translated 'wonder', whereas the word 'semeion' that's translated for 'sign' in this passage gets translated as sign, wonder, mark, it gets translated as all kinds of things, but 'teras' is always translated as 'wonder'. It really means 'omen'. God is testifying now, He is testifying to the truth of the gospel. When He was testifying when Christ came the blind saw, the lame walked, the deaf heard, the lepers were clean, He raised someone from the dead, these were all the wonders that He did. That's because Isaiah said He would do these things and that's how you will know it's the Messiah, that's what made it a 'teras', what made it a wonder here. So He still testifies with omens today. When He said to Solomon when the temple was dedicated in 1 Kings 9:6-7, "But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, then I will

cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples." One of the most clear omens, one of the most clear wonders that God did is that Jews who are in every nation and they aren't gathered together, they haven't been destroyed. No other nation that underwent what they did continued to exist, but God causes the Jews to continue to exist so that we look at them and say, 'This is what God does to a people who profess His name but do not know Him.' He said when Moses in Deuteronomy, they will be a byword and proverb throughout all the nations and then in 1 Kings He said they would be a proverb and byword throughout all the nations. This is the omen we continue to see today. Whenever you hear about Israel on the news, remember this is God witnessing that the gospel is true because they are still a proverb and a byword throughout all the nations. Which doesn't mean they can't be saved, but if they are saved they become Christians and don't identify as Jews anymore. The Jews are a proverb and byword throughout the nations and when we see these things and we see the omens coming to fulfillment, when we read Daniel and it says that all the kings of the earth will be crushed, how many kings are in the world now? When Christ came, almost every city had a king. How many are there now that have real power? A few here and there, but most don't even expect their offspring to inherit the power. The church has destroyed virtually all the kings of the earth. You have the Queen of England, but she has no power. This is what it looks like. God had said this would happen and it happened, He's witnessing to these things so we can go and say that we know that the Word of God is steadfast, it is not changing, it will come to pass, and there will be a just reward for all transgressions and all disobedience. Then the last one is "with various miracles." I don't like the translation of the word 'miracles' at all. The word 'miracle' is 'dunamis', that's where we get the word 'dynamite'. It means 'power' and 'ability', that's what the word means. He does this with various powers, He gives various abilities to the church. As I said a couple weeks ago, God has not surrounded us with a darkness that can be felt where like in Egypt they lit a light and the darkness would absorb the light. That's not what we are in, God has given us the ability to shine forth light in dark places. He has given us the power to do that. Even yesterday with the two hundred churches or whatever that sued the governor and the judge put a stay on the governor's order related to churches. Why did he do that? Because the world is still afraid of the church, the church still has real ability to do things. Just because we think we are so weak doesn't mean it's true. He has given the church real power, real authority, real ability to do things. God has surrounded us with a darkness that can be dispelled if we just shine forth light. He has given the church that ability to confound the wise, He has given us the ability with the law to shut people's mouths. When it's translated 'with various miracles', it makes it sound like we have to do these showy things that make people look, but what He did was put the church in place and it gave Him the ability to destroy the kings of the earth. Which is a greater testimony? That something showy happens once or that all the kings fall in the earth because the church of Jesus Christ, just like God said it would? Which is more important? Which is the greater power? Which is the declaration that you can trust that His word is steadfast? Not the showy thing that passes, but the effect of the church in the world. It's more important for us to understand that the miracles He is doing now are far greater than what He did at the time of Christ as Christ said in John 14:12, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father." God promised that the church would have the ability to do greater

works than Jesus Christ did. What are those greater works? No kingdom fell, the king of Jerusalem was still the king of Jerusalem after Christ came. God sent Christ so that His people could have power, He sent His Spirit so His people could have power, so that we can actually change the world. That's what He did and that's what He has been doing, but I think the church has forgotten this. Let's make sure we don't neglect so great a salvation that we're inattentive to the reality of what God is doing. "And gifts of the Holy Spirit." This is another way that He bears witness, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The word 'gifts' here is a lot different than other places like in 1 Corinthians 12, where it says there are diversities of gifts from the same Spirit. That word is about something that God freely gave. It's 'charisma', what we receive from God. This word that's translated 'gifts' is only used in one or two other places and it has to do with distribution. So the witness of God is how He distributes the gifts by the Holy Spirit among the church. We're supposed to look and see how He orders the church and how He brings somebody together who can preach with someone who can sing with someone who can play the piano and He orders it so we have the necessary things so we can go do the work in Nigeria and we have the necessary things to go to Brookdale and the abortion clinic. He gets and puts together a people so we can fulfill the ministry that He has given. That's the ministry that His word is steadfast, that He puts bodies together, how He distributes the gifts. He makes it so that nobody replaces Christ, Christ had all the gifts perfectly. None of us do that and instead He distributes the gifts among the saints for the work of the ministry and we're supposed to look how He orders things and think that this is a witness, that His word proved steadfast. He does it all "according to His own will." He's doing these things because it's what He wants to do because He said sending His Son was worth it to save us so He testifies to it through the signs, the wonders, and the abilities that He gives the church and the gifts He distributes. He does it because this is how He is glorified, this is why He considers it worth it to send His Son. Let's make sure we're attentive to that and we don't just drift away.

Applications

1. How seriously do you take these plagues? We spent a lot of time going through these plagues. We know that they took place because all of a sudden these people that were slaves became the kingdom of Israel and there is plenty of proof that the kingdom of Israel existed and these things really happened. No one should doubt the history, nobody should doubt that God judged Egypt with great judgements and He didn't do it so He could say what an unusual thing that He did, He did it so we can say, 'Understand transgressions and disobedience receive a just reward.' If you just say, 'Look how terrible it was for the Egyptians', you're not actually taking these things seriously. It's when you realize how seriously God judges sin, this is how seriously God will judge my sin if I don't believe, this is how seriously God considered sin and the sacrifice that was required so I could be saved. If you're saved, this is what we're supposed to take away from the plagues, the seriousness of this. This is what God does. God judged Egypt with great judgements so that we could understand that the word proved steadfast, He judges. The more we see that, the more we can genuinely appreciate the gift of deliverance He gives us. 2 Peter 2:9, "Then the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment." The more we understand the seriousness, the more we understand how it is God who

preserves us and it makes us more focused on praise, it makes us more focused on giving to God because we recognize who He is and what He has done for us. How seriously do you take the plagues?

2. God washes His bride in the water of the word not so He can just walk off and ignore it and continue in the same path, but so that we can take earnest heed that we are bound to take earnest heed, bound to hear these words and hold onto them and ask what they should mean to our life. That's why He gave the word. Are you giving earnest heed to the words that You have heard? The words when you read the Scripture, it's easy to say you read the Bible every day, but do you read the Bible or just go through this rote routine where you have to read a couple chapters. Do you read them asking God to show you your sin and how you're supposed to pay attention to it and ask Him how you're supposed to change by it? Don't think just reading the word is enough, you can be very inattentive and read the word. I know I have to fight against it all the time, it's so easy to be inattentive reading the word, even when you're reading it aloud. That's not how it should be, we need to make sure we are attentive and giving earnest heed to the words that we have heard. The sermons that you hear, can you look back and see how Exodus has changed your thoughts, how Exodus has changed your behavior, that's what we have been bound to do. That's what salvation binds us to do, not just hear and walk away, but to hold onto the things that God has told us and figure out how we're supposed to be changed by them. Are you taking earnest heed of the things that you have heard?
3. Are you defending against the current that would take you away from the things of God? Do you see how the world constantly pushes you away from the things of God? It's a constant, it's like a river that's flowing that's constantly trying to pull you away and unless you are anchored, unless you are tightly bound to the things that you have heard, it will carry you away. Are you making sure that you are tightly bound? Are you preparing yourself for the current? Understanding one of the ways that the current can take you away the easiest is false urgencies. You need to do this for your family right now, you need to do this for your business right now. There's this false urgency where you don't go, 'Wait a second, what happens if it really gets delayed by an hour and I spend time with God? How much really changes?' We are so easily swept away by false urgencies. Be prepared for that, look at your life and ask yourself the question where you get pulled away, where do you drift from the things that you should be doing? Deal with it, don't just let yourself keep drifting away. Bind yourself to the word of God. The answer is simple, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you. When we start to worry about the cares of the world rather than the kingdom of God, we will drift away. That's how the world drifts us away, we start to say we shouldn't deal with the things that God wants me to deal with and He will take care of the rest, instead we say we have to take care of the rest. That's how the current just sweeps us away. Make sure you're not like that. Is your focus on serving Him? For He always provides abundantly for His servants.
4. Do you treat your salvation as great? As you remember all the plagues of Egypt, as you remember, do you think of it as how precious it is that God would deliver you? Those plagues are terrible, but God says He will judge us with infinite more plagues in hell, but

He also delivers us and says He will deliver us to great joy. Is your attitude like Christ said it should be like in Matthew 13:45-46, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." That is what the kingdom of heaven is like, that is what the believer is supposed to be like, where he will sacrifice everything he has for that pearl of great price. That's not neglecting it, that's caring about it. When we're not willing to do that, understand you are neglecting it. What are you not giving up for the gospel? It needs to be everything. Whatever you are willing to give up for the gospel, that's what you're willing to pay for it. Look at your life and ask yourself what you are not willing to give up for the gospel? Understand how serious that is and how neglecting salvation you are considering. Put that in contrast to the plagues and ask which one you want to choose. If you won't give something up for the gospel, you are telling God to bring the plagues of Egypt upon you.

5. Do you look at the world through a biblical lens so you can see God's witness? His witness is everywhere out there, it's in the person whose life is transformed by the gospel. His witness is in how there aren't kings, the nations don't desire kings and they have desired kings for thousands of years and now they don't desire kings. This is the effect of the gospel. Instead of looking at the Jews and saying God is fulfilling His curse upon them, that His omens are coming to pass, if we just look and think 'those poor people', we're not looking at the world through a biblical lens and we won't see the witness of God that He has done. If you don't look at the church and say, 'Isn't this a marvel, that people that He has brought together', we are ignoring the witness of God. Make sure you're not ignoring the witness of God because God does give us human witnesses. He gives us the gospel in the midst of human saints, but let's make sure we also see His witness. He has changed the world through the church. That's what He said would happen and that's what is happening and what continues to happen. Let's make sure we look at the world through a biblical lens.
6. Are you neglecting so great a salvation? As John the Baptist said in Matthew 3:7-8, "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance." They were coming and they were neglecting. Even though they were coming to John the Baptist and asking him to baptize them, they were neglecting the great salvation. John the Baptist said, 'You don't want to neglect the great salvation, you want to say that salvation matters, you want to say that you have really repented of your sin? Here's how you know, bear fruit worthy of repentance.' That's how you know you have escaped, that's how you know that you take it as a precious thing that your life is changed. Don't think that you can say salvation through Jesus Christ is great, I will be with Him forever and it's wonderful, but then go on living your life with nothing changed. That's neglecting the salvation and God judges neglecting the salvation. Disobedience is neglecting. Disobedience receives a just reward. If you neglect salvation, God will give you a just reward. Are you working to bear fruits of repentance? It's a lot more than praying a prayer, it's a lot more than walking an aisle. It's a transformed life, you must be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

7. As a church, in what ways are we neglecting so great a salvation? In what ways are we doing things that please us as the church rather than asking what God would have us to do? In what ways are we failing to fulfill the roles that God has given us? In what ways are we ignoring opportunities that God has given us? I'm not standing here saying I have a list to go through, I'm saying this is something we should be considering as a church. How do we treat our salvation as small because we're not walking in obedience to God, we're not serving Him, we're not using the gifts that He has distributed to us in the way that we should use them? This is a question we need to consider. Let's not just walk away pretending we didn't hear the word. Let's ask ourselves as a church how we neglect salvation.

Let me close us in prayer. Oh Lord God, we do thank You for the word today. We thank You for how Hebrews fits so well with what we have been thinking about and talking about in Exodus. Lord, You have these great ministries, the ministry of death which was Moses and the ministry of life which was Christ and the Holy Spirit. Both of them say don't neglect salvation. Work in us, convict us of our sin, cause us to walk in a way that shows we are not neglecting to great a salvation. We ask this in Your Son's name, amen.