

NEGLECTED TEXTS

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The reason for this study is to urge the belief and acceptance of “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27). A sampling of “neglected texts” will point out why many view religion as such a controversial subject and why reaching the point of agreement in matters religious seems so elusive. Controversy often arises because people do not know what actually is in the Bible. Disagreement abounds because passages from the Bible that can bring about a consensus of viewpoint often are neglected.

I Timothy 2:5

The text reads, “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.” Roman Catholics neglect this text not just because they pray “in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit” but also because they entertain the notion that there are virtually innumerable mediators between God and man through whom prayers may be offered that will ultimately reach the throne of God. If a Catholic accepts the authority of the Bible as superior to the Pope and so-called church tradition, then I Timothy 2:5 will signal his reason for leaving the Catholic Church.

John 4:1-2

In their haste to reject baptism in water and its relationship to the salvation of the soul many have adopted the view that the subject never was a point of emphasis with Jesus. However, this text says, “When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples).” The importance of baptism in water is strengthened when the question, “How many disciples did John baptize?” is answered. Matthew said, “Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins” (Matt. 3:5-6). Clearly, John baptized a lot of people, but bear in mind that “Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John.” Therefore, to suggest that baptism was not a point of emphasis with Jesus is a false statement. Those that minimize the place and importance of baptism neglect John 4:1-2 and to do so is to “reject the counsel of God against themselves” (Luke 7:29-30).

Matthew 19:9

As a crucial text authorizing the innocent party to divorce a mate guilty of fornication and allowing the option to remarry this passage is of immense importance. It says, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” It is rejected by those who are in unscriptural marriages and neglected by those in teaching positions in local congregations who have not the courage and love to stand with Jesus on acceptable marriages.

I Peter 3:21

One of the more obvious “neglected texts,” this verse stands alongside several others crying out to be noticed for the expression of faith it contains. A partial list would include Mark 16:16; John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:3-6; Colossians 2:12-13; and Revelation 1:5-6. But, here Peter wrote, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” What does baptism do? It saves. When does baptism save? It saves now. No question can be sustained about the baptism of the passage referring to water baptism because the preceding verse reflects on the time when the entire globe was covered in water.

James 2:24

In the midst of so many who seem adamant about salvation being by grace alone through faith alone, James 2:24 frequently falls victim to apathy. James wrote, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.” Many have heralded the view that any mention of what the Bible says about baptism is to advance a works based salvation. Apparently unwilling to discern the concept of works as associated with the Old Testament from works as expressions of obedience under the New Testament, any reference to work capriciously is castigated. A rather curious development occurs in the English Bible on the subject of works. The subject of baptism is not once referenced as a “work” but faith is! The gospel of John recorded that “Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent” (John 6:29). The washing of regeneration Paul wrote about to Titus is distinguished from meritorious works. Paul wrote, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy

Ghost” (Titus 3:5). The “washing of regeneration” refers to baptism. And, concerning “works of righteousness” an inspired apostle said baptism was “not by works of righteousness which we have done.” The works about which James wrote that are associated with justification are the same works John wrote about in Revelation 14:13 when he said, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.” Folks need to be working for the Lord, or they are going to come up short at the judgment because the Bible says, “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).