

Will You Swallow Anything?

The shark is a large fish that swims in ocean waters and has an equally large appetite. In fact, so large is his appetite that he will swallow almost anything that he can get into his mouth without even knowing what it is. A small fish called the urchin fish, when he encounters a shark, will roll himself into a small ball. The shark will of course swallow the urchin, but in this case the shark is the loser. This urchin fish is a parasite, and once inside the shark's stomach he unfolds and begins to prey on the shark from within its stomach, eventually destroying his victim completely.

What a stupid thing it is for the shark to “swallow” something without first knowing what it is, but after all, aren't there people in the religious world like that? Many swallow the traditional religion of their relatives without ever first checking to see if that is what the Bible really teaches. Many simply swallow what their church or denomination practices and teaches simply because “that's the way its been done or taught for years.” Many swallow what their preachers and teachers teach without any concern as to whether the Bible teaches it or not, so long as it “sounds good.”

Modernism and liberalism are running rampant, not only in the world, but also among churches of Christ. More and more we hear of congregations who are accepting the “new hermeneutic,” that is, the new way of interpreting the Bible. The old way of commands, apostolic example, and of necessary inference, is a thing of the past, no longer acceptable to “modern and more intelligent thinking.” As a result more and more we hear of denominational “baptism” (whether it is sprinkling, pouring, etc.) being accepted. We are hearing of women being allowed to serve in roles in worship and organization that the Bible strictly forbids. The Lord's Supper is no longer served each Sunday, but on Wednesday or any other day. Elderships are being dissolved because members no longer recognize them as having authority to “rule” and make decisions — except as those decisions are first corroborated by “prominent men” in the congregation or by the “deacons.” We hear of more and more churches of Christ simply becoming “community churches,” serving simply the social needs of the community (wealth seminars, art and craft groups, etc.).

Let's examine carefully what we “swallow,” because like the shark it may be too late afterward. Similar to the shark who has few enemies that can destroy it from without, God's kingdom cannot be destroyed from forces within. Satan's forces, as powerful as they may be (and they are powerful), simply are no match for the spiritual forces and strength of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His word (Romans 8:31, 37). God's people can only be destroyed from WITHIN! That's what is happening in many congregations today.

We need to be “examining the scriptures daily” (Acts 17:11). We are responsible to not “swallow” anything that anyone says — it matters not who or what they are. We will be held individually accountable to God for the errors we have allowed to come into our minds and into the church!

Oliver Murray