

Better Watch Out!

Be forewarned: Today is April Fools' Day. And who knows what prank may be waiting just around the corner?

The custom of setting aside a day for the playing of harmless pranks upon one's neighbor is recognized everywhere. According to *Wikipedia*, some precursors of April Fools' Day include the Roman festival of Hilaria, the Holi festival of India, and the Medieval Feast of Fools.

In 1508, French poet Eloy d'Amerval referred to a *poisson d'avril* (April fool, literally "April fish" – and there is more on that later). In 1539, Flemish poet Eduard de Dene wrote of a nobleman who sent his servants on foolish errands on April 1. In 1686, John Aubrey referred to the holiday as "Fool's holy day," the first British reference. On April 1, 1698, several people were tricked into going to the Tower of London to "see the Lions washed."

Here are a few other practices cited by Wikipedia:

- In Ireland, it was traditional to entrust the victim with an "important letter" to be given to a named person. That person would then ask the victim to take it to someone else, and so on. The letter, when finally opened, contained the words, "send the fool further."
- In Poland, April 1 is a day in which many jokes are told and various hoaxes are prepared by people, the media and even public institutions. Serious activities are avoided. The conviction is so strong that the anti-Turkish alliance with Leopold I, signed on April 1, 1683, was backdated to March 31.
- In the Nordic countries, most news media outlets will publish exactly one false story on April 1; for newspapers, this will typically be a front-page article, but not the top headline.
- In Italy, France, Belgium and French-speaking areas of Switzerland and Canada, April 1 tradition is often known as "April fish." This includes attempting to attach a paper fish to the victim's back without being noticed.



So much for the intent of the day, and the humor and laughter it seeks to invoke. When it comes to the subject of fools, the *Holy Bible* has much to say. Here are a few verses:

- Proverbs 18:2 – "A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion."

(more)



- Proverbs 29:11 – “A fool gives full vent to his spirit, but a wise man quietly holds it back.”
- Proverbs 1:7 – “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
- Ecclesiastes 7:9 – “Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the bosom of fools.”
- Proverbs 15:7 – “The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the hearts of fools.”
- Psalm 14:1 – “The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”
- Matthew 7:26 – (Jesus is speaking) “And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.”

And, finally, the encouragement the Apostle Paul gave to the believers in the church of Corinth – and to us:

We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! (1 Corinthians 4:10 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter