

The Ten-Day Sleep

The Story of April Fools Day

All over the world, children go to sleep at night. Some crawl into soft beds, others lie down on mats on the floor or climb into bunk beds. Some children have a bedtime story first, while other parents might sing their children a song to help them fall asleep. Some children complain about going to bed, but I know you are cheerfully obedient when your mom or dad sends you to bed, right?



No matter what the differences are in *how* children go to sleep, one thing is the same. All the children expect that when they wake up in the morning, it will be the next day. I'm going to tell you about some children who went to bed one night, and when they woke up, it was ten days later!

A long time ago, in the year 1582, the wise men and scientists who served Pope Gregory XIII discovered that the calendar everyone had been using wasn't quite right.

You know from science class that a year is the amount of time it takes the Earth to travel around the sun one time. Scientists now know that it takes 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 49.7 seconds for that to happen. Since there are only 365 days in a year, we adjust our calendar by adding a day in February every few years. The old calendar used in Pope Gregory's day (it was called the Julian Calendar) didn't have all this figured out quite right. By 1582, the dates were off by about 10 days.

Pope Gregory decided that after everyone went to sleep on October 4th he would flip the calendar pages ahead ten days to correct the error. When everyone woke up on the day they expected to be October 5th, the calendar said October 15th. It was as if they'd slept for ten days!

Everyone's birthday and anniversary dates were changed. If your birthday was on June 2nd before the change, after the change you'd celebrate it on June 12th. Gregory also moved New Years day from April 1st to January 1st, but some people still celebrated on April 1st. They didn't like the new system and refused to change along with everyone else. Others thought those who wouldn't change were dreadfully old-fashioned. They called the old-fashioned people "fools" and played tricks on them. That's why we celebrate April Fools day on April 1st.

Changes are hard sometimes, like when a friend moves away or you go to a new church or school. Like those first "April Fools," sometimes we try to stay away from changes and we wish everything could always be the same.

But the Bible tells us that will not happen. It says that life is like a vapor. Do you know what a vapor is? It's like the steam that comes out of the teakettle when it's whistling, or smoke from a fire. Vapor is always changing in shape. Our life is like that, too, from God's point of view. Things are always changing.

Isn't it good to know that God never changes? The Bible says He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. We can trust God to take care of us when things are changing all around us, and we know—because the Bible says it's true—that He has good things planned for those who love Him. When we go to sleep tonight we don't need to worry. No matter what day it is when we wake up, God will still be in charge and He will still be planning good things for those who love Him.

"For I am Jehovah, I change not."
(Mal. 3:6).

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