

## THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

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1. It is a a good deal more than just a repetitious melody with pretty phrases and strange gifts. This delightful seemingly nonsense rhyme set to music had a quite serious purpose when it was written.
2. Catholics in England during the period 1558 to 1829, when Parliament finally emancipated Catholics in England, who were prohibited from any practice of their faith, private or public. It was a crime to be a Catholic. The rhyme in song, "*The Twelve Days of Christmas*," became an underground catechism.
3. While Roman Catholicism differs in many profound ways from Protestantism; nevertheless, the statements in the song are true. Catholic, in its truest sense means the "universal" church.
4. "*The Twelve Days of Christmas*" was written in England as one of the "*catechism songs*" to help young Catholic children to learn the tenets of the faith. It was a memory aid, when anything in writing, indicating adherence to the Catholic faith, could not only get you imprisoned, tortured, or executed in the most horrible ways.
- 5 The song's gifts have hidden meanings describing the teachings of the faith. For example: "*my true love*" mentioned in the song doesn't refer to an earthly suitor; rather, it refers to God Himself. The "*me*" who receives the presents refers to the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. "*The partridge in the pear tree*" is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
6. Jesus Christ is symbolically presented as a mother partridge which feigns injury to decoy predators from her helpless nestlings, reflecting the expression of Christ's sadness over the fate of Jerusalem and His death on the cross: "*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stone those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling.*" (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34; John 10:11-18)
7. The song begins:
  - (1) "*On the first day of Christmas, my **True Love gave to me a partridge in a pear tree.***" (Matt. 1:18-25, John 3:16) Subsequently, each day's gifts are as follows:
  - (2) "***Two Turtle Doves***" (Levit. 5:11; 12:8; Luke 2:24), representing: The **Old and New Testaments**, possibly the **humanity and deity of Jesus Christ**.
  - (3) "***Three French hens***" (high quality hens), representing: **theological virtues**: Faith, Hope, and Love (or Charity). (1 Cor. 13:13) or the **Trinity** (Matt. 28:20)
  - (4) "***Four Calling bird,***" representing: the **four Gospels** or the **four evangelists**: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
  - (5) "***Five Golden Rings,***" representing: the **five books of Moses**, the Pentateuch, which gives the history of man, his creation, his fall, his salvation, and his destiny through God's grace.

- (6) **“Six Geese A-laying,”** representing: the **six days of creation**, God’s grace provision. (Genesis 1, 2)
  - (7) **“Seven Swans A-swimming,”** representing: the **seven gifts of the Holy Spirit:** apostles, prophets, teachers, miracles, healings, helps, administration, and languages (tongues) for the establishment of the church in Acts. (1 Cor. 12:28)
  - (8) **“Eight Maids A-milking,”** representing: **eight beatitudes.** (Matthew 5:3-11)
  - (9) **“Nine Ladies Dancing,”** representing: the **nine fold fruit** of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23)
  - (10) **“Ten Lords A-leaping,”** representing: the **Ten Commandments.** (Exodus 20:3-17; Deut. 5:7-21)
  - (11) **“Eleven Pipers Piping,”** representing: the **eleven faithful apostles.** (Matt.10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:14-16; Acts 1:13)
  - (12) **“Twelve Drummers Drumming,”** representing: the twelve points of the **Apostle’s Creed** (or the twelve **tribes of Israel** and the **twelve representatives of the church** sitting in judgment in Revelation 4:4, 10; 19:4.
8. Some people have suggested that a **deck of cards** can be used to teach these same Bible truths., for example:
- (1) The **ace** can represent the **incarnation** of the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - (2) The **two** can represent the **Old and New Testament** or the humanity and deity of Jesus Christ, as the Two Turtle Doves.
  - (3) **Cards three through ten** would represent the **same truths** as the third through the tenth day of Christmas in the song.
  - (4) The **eleventh card, the Jack,** represents the **faithful witnesses** in the church like the eleven faithful apostles.
  - (5) The **twelfth card, The Queen,** represents the Apostle’s Creed and the church, **“the bride of Christ.”** (Rev. 4:4, 10;19:4; 21:9; 22:17)
  - (6) The **extra card, card number thirteen,** represents the Lord Jesus Christ in the Future, reigning as **“King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”** (1 Tim. 6:15; Rev. 17:14; Rev. 19:16)