

December, 2013

Dear Families of Gilead Bible Church,



I never knew the history behind the song – “The 12 Days of Christmas.” I always thought that it was just another secular, materialistic song. Recently, I read the following account and it changed my mind – the song actually has great spiritual implications!

\*\*In England, between 1558 and 1829, it was not legal for Catholics to practice their kind of Christianity in public or private. Being a Catholic was treated as a bad crime. If you even owned a Catholic Bible, you could be put in prison! Catholics were stopped from worshipping because King Henry VIII fell out with the Catholic Church and started his own 'Protestant' Church (what is now the Church of England). There were many people who were still Catholics and they worshipped in secret.

'The Twelve Days of Christmas' was written in England at the beginning of this time. Some people think that it was written to help children learn about their Catholic religion. In the carol, the days are supposed to represent special symbols and have hidden meanings, because it was illegal to have anything in writing that would indicate that you were a Catholic.

But there's no evidence that this is true and it seems most likely just to be a folk song and that the meanings were added at a later date! Also, all the symbols can be used by Protestants and other Christians! There was another song called 'A New Dial', written in 1625, which gave religious meanings to the 12 Days of Christmas, but not so people could practise their faith in secret. If you'd like to know more about this, please go to the 12 Days of Christmas page on snopes.com

The 12 Days of Christmas refer to the twelve day period that starts with Christmas day and ends on Epiphany (6th January). The song begins, On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me... The 'true love' was meant to represent God, the true love of the world. The 'me' in the carol is the Christian man or woman who receives these presents. The meanings given to the 12 Days are:

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The 'partridge in a pear tree' is Jesus who died on the cross. In ancient times a partridge was often used as mythological symbol of a divine, sacred king.

The 'two turtle doves' are the Old and New Testaments of the Bible - another gift from God. Doves also symbolize peace.

The 'three French hens' are faith, hope and love - the three gifts of the Holy Spirit. (See 1 Corinthians 13). The French hens can also represent God the Father, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The 'four calling birds' are the four Gospels in the New Testament of the Bible.

The 'five golden rings' are the first five books of the Bible also called the Pentateuch, the Books of Moses or the Torah.

The 'six geese a-laying' are the six days of creation.

The 'seven swans a swimming' are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. (See 1 Corinthians 12:8-11, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, 1 Peter 4:10-11)

The 'eight maids a milking' are the eight beatitudes, Jesus' teachings on happiness. (See Matthew 5:3-10)

The 'nine ladies dancing' are nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22)

The 'ten lords a-leaping' are the Ten Commandments in the Bible. (See Exodus 20)

The 'eleven pipers piping' are the eleven faithful disciples of Jesus.

The 'twelve drummers drumming' were the twelve points of the Apostles' Creed.

Have a Bless Christmas and New Year,

Pastor and Helen Moy

\*\* [http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/carols\\_stories.shtml](http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/carols_stories.shtml)



## 2013年12月

親愛的基列主內弟兄姊妹，

對於這一首流行的聖誕民間歌曲“聖誕節的12天” -- 我從來不知道這首歌背後的歷史。我原以為，這只是一首世俗物慾的歌曲。最近，我讀到以下敘述，它改變了我的想法.原來這首歌其實有很大屬靈上的涵義！

\*\*遠在英格蘭1558年和1829年之間，天主教徒無論在公共或私人場合下實行他們基督教的信仰是不合法的。作為一個天主教徒是被視為一種罪行。如果你擁有一本天主教的聖經，你可能會被關進監獄！天主教徒被禁停止崇拜是因為國王亨利八世與天主教會鬧翻了，並開始了自己的“新教”教會（就是現在的英格蘭教會）。當時有很多人仍然是天主教徒，但他們卻要在暗地裏崇拜。

“聖誕的十二天” 就在這個早期時候寫於英國。有些人認為這歌是寫來幫助孩子們了解他們的天主教宗教。其實在這首聖誕頌的每一天都代表著特殊的表徵和含有隱藏的意義，因為在當時任何寫作的內容若表明你是一個天主教徒都是非法的。

目前還沒有確實證明這是真實的，它僅僅是一個民間歌曲;並且那些涵義也有可能在稍後的日子才被添加的！此外，所有的表徵亦可能被新教徒和其他基督徒所用！有另一首歌寫於1625年叫“一個新的撥號”，它給予聖誕節的12天一些宗教意義，但並不表示人們在秘密中實踐他們的信仰。如果您想知道更多關於這個資料，請到12天的聖誕頁snopes.com查看.

聖誕節的12天是指那12天期間開始於聖誕日並結束於主顯節（1月6日）。這首歌的起頭是，在聖誕節的第一天，我的真愛送給我... “真愛” 是代表神，世界的真愛。在聖誕歌中的“我”是指那些收到這禮物的基督徒。

### 12天的禮物含義是：

“一隻梨樹裡的鷓鴣” 指死在十字架上的耶穌。在古時代，鷓鴣常常被用作譬如為一個神聖國王的神話象徵。

“兩隻斑鳩” 代表聖經中的舊約和新約 - 另一樣來自神的禮物。鴿子亦象徵和平。

“三隻法國母雞” 代表信心，希望和愛 - 聖靈的三件禮物。（見哥林多前書13）。三隻法國母雞也可以代表父神，祂的兒子耶穌及聖靈。

“四隻鳴唱的鳥兒” 是聖經中新約四福音書。

“五個金環” 是聖經的頭五部書也叫摩西五經，或摩西的律法書。

"六隻在產卵的鵝"是六天的創造。

"七隻在游水的天鵝" 是七樣屬靈的恩賜。（見哥林多前書12:8-11，羅馬書12章，以弗所書4，彼得前書4:10-11）

"八個在擠奶的女僕" 是指八福，耶穌對快樂的教導。（見5:3-10 馬太福音）

"九個跳舞的淑女" 是九個聖靈所結的果子。（加拉太書5:22）

"十個在跳躍的貴族" 是聖經中的十誡。（見出埃及記20章）

"十一個吹風笛的笛手" 是耶穌的11個忠心的門徒。

"十二個打著鼓的鼓手" 指使徒信經中的十二教條。

祝你們有一個滿有祝福的聖誕節和新年

梅牧師及師母

\*\* 摘自 [http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/carols\\_stories.shtml](http://www.whychristmas.com/customs/carols_stories.shtml)