

Monday Music – The Twelve Days Of Christmas (by Straight No Chaser) & The Real Meaning of the Song



The Twelve Days of Christmas by Straight No Chaser

I never thought *The Twelve Days of Christmas* could be so funny. ([Tweet this](#))

I've also never thought as much about the meaning behind the

original lyrics until I wrote this post.

Prepare for a totally new and fun spin on the tune and lyrics of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* as sung by the acapella group *Straight No Chaser*.

It's brilliant.

But I have more than just laughing planned for you. I also want to inspire you with the meaning behind the original song lyrics as many understand them – as well as how I see them.

But first the song:

I've discovered there's quite a debate about whether or not there's really hidden meaning to the lyrics of *The Twelve Days of Christmas*.

I don't think *Straight No Chaser* has any hidden meaning in their version – the fun is right out front for all to see.

But the original version has long been said to be about its hidden meaning.

Some believe this song was written in response to the time in history when it was illegal for the common man to possess written Scripture. The church leadership didn't trust the common man to handle it correctly, so they created the law – and the punishment.

For anyone outside the church leadership possessing even a verse on a piece of paper, being burned at the stake was just one of the church's consequences of choice.

Horribly tragic. I know.

([Glimpses of Truth](#) by [Jack Cavanaugh](#) is a fascinating novel based on this horrific practice, and learn the inspiring story of how John Wycliffe's translation of the New Testament transpired out of this.)

Some think this prohibition is the true origin of the song.

Others think not.

I think it doesn't matter.

Whether the author intended the song to point to Christ or not, we can be encouraged by visible meaning in the song.

According to a few websites (which makes it official, right?) here is the meaning to the lyrics of *The Twelve Days of Christmas* – with a few of my own mixed in:

On the first day of Christmas my true love gave to me.

“My true love” is God.

In the song and in real life.

There's no truer love than His.

A partridge in a pear tree.

The Partridge is Jesus Christ.

There being only one partridge in the pear tree reflects the truth that Christ is the one and only way to God.

And of course the partridge is in the pear tree reflecting Christ on the cross.

. . . Two Turtledoves

The Two Turtle Doves are the Old and New Testament.

They also remind me of the two birds (either turtledoves or pigeons – [Luke 2:24](#)) Joseph and Mary offered as a sacrifice after the birth of Christ.

. . . Three French Hens

The Three French Hens are Faith, Hope, and Charity.

They also remind me of the Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

. . . Four Calling Birds

The Four Calling Birds are the four gospels of the four Evangelists (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John).

The little research I did revealed that originally the word “calling” was actually “colly,” which means “black.” So apparently they were blackbirds, not “calling birds.”

(I assume these would not have been the blackbirds baked in a pie – there were four and twenty of them.)

I’m sticking with four calling birds, calling out the great message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

. . . Five Golden Rings

The Five Golden Rings are the first five books of the Bible.

The five golden rings also remind me that the number five in the Bible symbolizes grace, and gold symbolizes divinity.

Of course, if you’ve been to even one wedding, you’ve heard the symbolism of a ring. It stands for love that never ends.

Perfectly fitting! To me, the five golden rings picture divine grace that never ends for Christ’s Bride – all who trust in Him for salvation.

. . . Six Geese a Laying

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

How appropriate that the geese who’re laying eggs, which

clearly symbolizes the beginning of life, are linked to Creation – the beginning of all life.

. . . Seven Swans a Swimming

The seven swans a swimming are the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit:

wisdom (knowing the right thing to do considering the situation and God's will), **understanding** (grasping the , **knowledge, counsel, fortitude** (courage to do what's right), **piety** (devotion to God) and **fear of the Lord** (being in awe of the Lord).

Swans are truly elegant creatures, but don't be fooled by their graceful appearance. They're powerful, just like the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If a swan is chasing after you, run for your life! You don't want to be caught by him.

But, if the Holy Spirit is chasing after you, stop running from Him and start running towards Him. It'll be the best decision you ever made.

. . . Eight Maids a Milking

The eight maids a milking are the eight beatitudes. [Matthew 5:3-10 \(ESV\)](#)

When I think about the maids milking the cows, it reminds me of I Peter 2:2 ~ "Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation."

In other words, desire the Word of God as purely as an infant who naturally and instinctively craves her mother's milk.

There's no reasoning with an infant. When they crave their

mother's milk, nothing else will satisfy – especially at 3:00 am.

This thought reminds me that in each of the eight beatitudes, Christ's words reveals that any who trust in Him have all their needs met in Him. Amen.

. . . Nine Ladies Dancing

If I were written into this song, this is where I'd be – Dancing.

The nine ladies dancing are the nine Fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

As dancing naturally flows from my soul through to my feet when I hear music, the fruits of the Spirit naturally flow from the soul of one who abides in Christ.

We know we're "abiding in Christ" when we remain so closely connected to Christ that we can't tell where He ends and we begin, because, in truth, there is no end or beginning for the one who abides in Christ. Our life is fully wrapped up in His – His life is now our life. ([Galatians 2:20](#))

Doesn't that make you want to dance!

. . . Ten Lords a Leaping

The ten lords a leaping are the Ten Commandments.

You know the Ten Commandments – those laws that we can never keep!

No matter who you are, you've broken at least one – maybe even once a day.

The Bible tells us that if we break even one law, we've

broken the whole law, and are found guilty.

What's our sentence?

Death.

Great!

Christ said that He didn't come to get rid of the Ten Commandments, but to fulfill them.

You'd almost wish He'd get rid of them, except when you think of living in a society that didn't at least try to follow them.

Yikes.

The better plan was His plan.

He fulfilled the whole law (kept every Commandment) so He could die for our sins in our place, and then He rose to give us life.

That's a sweet deal that will make you want to leap for joy with the ten lords a leaping.

. . . Eleven Pipers Piping

The eleven pipers piping are the eleven faithful apostles.

Judas Iscariot didn't make the cut into this song.

The eleven faithful apostles traveled to different parts of the world, spreading the message of Christ.

To those who received their message, the Gospel was like beautiful music to their sin-sick souls.

To those who rejected their message, the Gospel sounded like someone first learning to play the oboe.

That's not a beautiful sound.

My mom said I sounded like a sick duck when I first took up the oboe. She was being kind. I sounded more like I was strangling the poor duck.

. . . Twelve Drummer Drumming

The twelve drummers drumming are the twelve points of doctrine of the Apostle's Creed.

"If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer." ~ Henry David Thoreau.

That's seems to sum up the life of Christ fairly well.

Christ marched to the beat of a different Drummer than the rest of the world.

As we place our faith in Him, we'll learn to hear His voice. Christ will be the Drummer we hear.

If our doctrine – our beliefs – are grounded in the Word of God, we'll begin to march to the beat of Christ.

We won't keep pace with the world, but we'll keep pace with the One – and that's what matters.

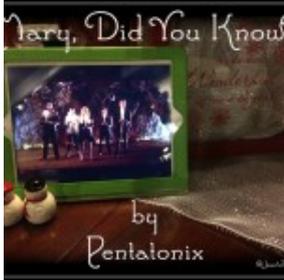
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That's my take on *The Twelve Days of Christmas*. I hope you enjoyed it.

*No doubt you enjoyed *Straight No Chaser's* take on *The Twelve Days of Christmas* – how could you not?*

What are your favorite Christmas songs? Share a suggestion or two in the comment section. I have one more Monday Music Christmas Song post. I might just use yours.

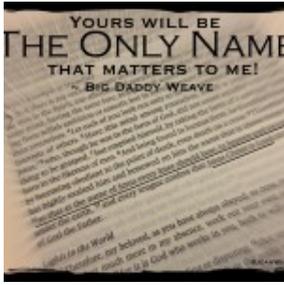
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