

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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CHRISTIANITY IN ANCIENT BRITAIN (Part 1)

Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil (1 Peter 2:16)

It was a Roman soldier that offered Jesus vinegar in the hours before his death. Crucifixion is slow, leaving its victims parched and thirsty. The legionary was moved by mercy, not scorn, to give from his own rations, for vinegar, or sour wine, was the drink of the Roman infantry. There are no records, but perhaps the fame of Christ's humble virtue was carried abroad with the Roman army.

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Q&A: CAIN'S WIFE

All Bible references are to the Anglicised New International Version (NIV-UK)

Question: Genesis 4: 17 states that 'Cain lay with his wife, and she became pregnant'. Where did Cain get his wife?

Answer: Christians have many times been challenged with this problem and are often unable to provide an answer satisfactory even to themselves. While accepting the Bible account of mankind's origins, some have compromised their faith by concluding that Cain's wife must have come from a race created before Adam.

But the Bible testimony is consistent. 'God created man in his own image . . . male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them: "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it"' (Genesis 1: 27, 28). Evidently the earth was not already populated when Adam and Eve were given that commission. St. Paul adds his confirmation: 'The first man Adam became a living being' (1 Corinthians 15: 45).

Though through disobedience Adam and Eve incurred a death sentence, its application was gradual and they lived in straitened conditions for many years, sons and daughters being born to them ([Genesis 5: 4](#)). No prohibition was laid down at that time and as the marriage of brothers to sisters was obviously the Divine intention, it is reasonable to conclude that some daughters were born to Adam and Eve while their first sons were still children, and in due time Cain married one of his sisters.

At the time of Moses, Jehovah established precise laws governing the sexual relationship. Leviticus 18 details the limitations to be imposed, verse 9 forbidding such activity between siblings: 'Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.' The Bible testimony tells of a human race burdened with increasing infirmities as generation succeeds generation. and as advancing knowledge of genetics confirms that in-breeding increases the risks of physical or mental disabilities the wisdom of God is manifested in the marriage laws.

At the dawn of human history the children of Adam and Eve were much nearer to perfection and the offspring of brothers and sisters would not be impaired by the close genetic relationship.

[More Q&A on our Web site](#)

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Extracts from *Decorum: A Practical Treatise on Etiquette and Dress of the Best American Society* (1878; J. A. Ruth & Co.; New York and Chicago)

Pick your topic well . . .

In talking with ladies of ordinary education, avoid political, scientific, or commercial topics, and choose only such subjects as are likely to be of interest to them.

and watch yourself on the street . . .

In England a gentleman is not expected to speak to a lady on the street or recognize her, unless she first salutes him with a smile or bow. But on the continent of Europe the rule is reversed, and no lady, however intimate you may be with her, will acknowledge you in the street unless you first honor her with a bow of recognition. The American fashion is not like either of them. For here the really well-bred man always politely and respectfully bows to every lady he knows, and, if she is a well-bred woman, she acknowledges the respect paid her. . . . [W]hy should a lady and gentleman, who know who each other are, scornfully and doggedly pass each other in the streets as though they were enemies? There is no good reason for such *impoliteness*, in the practice of politeness. As compared with the English, the French or continental fashion is certainly more consonant with the rules of good breeding. But the American rule is better than either, for it is based upon the acknowledged general principle, that it is every gentleman's and lady's duty to be polite in all places. . . . It is a ridiculous idea that we are to practice ill-manners in the name of etiquette.

Don't forget the hat . . .

A gentleman never sits in the house with his hat on in the presence of ladies for a single moment. Indeed, so strong is the force of habit, that a gentleman will quite unconsciously remove his hat on entering a parlor, or drawing-room, even if there is no one present but himself.

. . . or the table manners . . .

1. Never hold your knife and fork upright on each side of your plate while you are talking.
2. Do not cross your knife and fork upon your plate until you have finished.
3. When you send your plate to be refilled, place your knife and fork upon one side of it or put them upon your piece of bread.
4. The old-fashioned habit of abstaining from taking the last piece upon the plate is no longer observed. It is to be supposed that the vacancy can be supplied if necessary.

DRAGNET

Items of interest from the World Wide Web

Britain

Bishop Tom Wright: New Labour erasing God from political life

<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/comment/faith/article7017240.ece>>

Climate Change

Weather data 'not well organised'

<<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8511701.stm>>

World may not be warming

<<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article7026317.ece>>

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