

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2016



Who was Jesus? A simple reminder....

He was a man who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher.

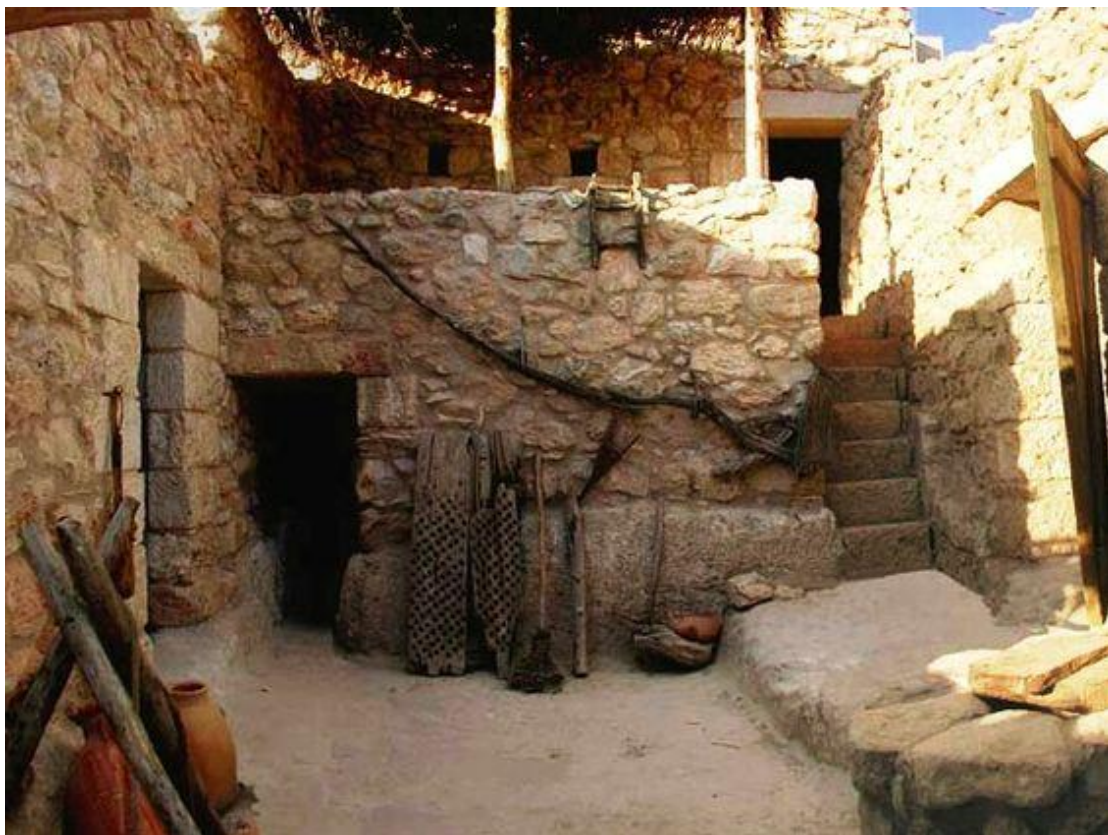
He never owned a home. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put His foot inside a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but Himself...

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed upon a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – His coat. When He was dead, He was laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen long centuries have come and gone, and today He is a centerpiece of the human race and leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built; all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that one solitary life.

(Dr James Allan Francis - 1926)



A reconstruction of the typical 1st century Jewish home. This is the lower room, where the animals would have been kept, in which Jesus would have been born



'THOUGHT FOR THE DAY'

the ministry often challenges our Biblical understanding, so here is a reflection on an issue very much in the forefront of our work:

Christmas, regrettably is a sad time for many people. Perhaps it is the contrast between their lives and the Christmas portrayed on every card or in every lavish advertisement. For everyone whose family gathers together, happy and well-fed, there are many for whom that is far from the reality. One story comes to mind:

A young woman recalled one childhood Christmas when her mother went 'into one' on Christmas Eve over some lapse by her errant father. She went around the house tearing down every decoration, pushed over and trampled the tree and then trashed every present. Now the young woman cannot look at a Christmas tree without fearing someone will attack it.

Of course, it was to bring healing that God took on flesh and became Immanuel, not to so we could have an annual binge, but to ensure an eternity when such hurt is washed away. His feast is everlasting and all are invited.

It is sad to hear that many people have such associations with Christmas, yet into that dread and despair is born hope. In the gospel, all can take comfort and be able to say as Paul did.

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. (Romans 8:18)

I think we can accept this from a man who had personally experienced suffering (for the full list see 2 Corinthians 11:24-27)

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

In response to our recruitment film shown over the summer, eight people that came to the training have joined the team. The team strength is now twenty-five.

ATP COMMISSIONING SERVICE

On 13th November, we held a service to commission the new volunteers and re-commission the existing town pastors. It was well attended and most of the churches of Alton and the area were represented.

PRAISE GOD FOR...

- continuing acceptance and support of the people of Alton
- for placing people in our path
- for the continuing support of the police, the publicans and the town council

PLEASE PRAY...

- for the sustaining encouragement of the Holy Spirit
- for energy and protection for the team
- for God's leading over extending our ministry
- for more opportunities to tell people about our Saviour and God's redemptive plan for us all

We publish an anonymised prayer sheet fortnightly by email. If you would like to receive these please email us at the address above. These can provide a focus for use in small prayer groups or to include in your private devotions. It goes without saying that our ministry, like any other, survives, thrives and provides through prayer and our prayer team is therefore essential.

**A HAPPY CHRISTMAS WITH THANKS TO ALL OUR
SUPPORTERS** 

Alton (still) needs you!

"ATP patrols are a really valued by my officers and assist in keeping the town calm". Inspector Louise Rooks, Prevention and Neighbourhood Inspector for East Hampshire Area

We continue to recruit volunteers for town pastors. If you are interested please contact altontownpastors@gmail.com for a (very) simple application form or return the tear off strip to the ATP Coordinator, c/o Harvest Church.

The best way to find out if this is for you is join us one Saturday evening.

Contact Nigel Pink

phone: 07502 691899

altontownpastors@gmail.com

OR FILL IN THE ATTACHED FORM



IF ANY OF THE ABOVE HAS INSPIRED YOU, PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO THE ADDRESS BELOW OR EMAIL:

altontownpastors@gmail.com

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I would like to find out more about the work of Alton Town Pastors.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

PHONE.....EMAIL.....

I am interested in volunteering for the (please indicate):

- Friday early shift: (9.30pm – 11.30pm)
- Friday late shift: (9pm – 2.30am)
- Saturday early shift: (9.30pm – 11.30pm)
- Saturday late shift: (9pm – 2.30am)
- Prayer team – to receive the prayer sheet

**Please return to:
Alton Town Pastors Co-ordinator
c/o Dave Burnhams
Harvest Church
Malting Close
Alton
Hants. GU34 1DT**