

World-Changing Births

Birthdays, and the celebration of them, are important events – for us and for those we know and love.

Each time a baby enters this world, parents, relatives and acquaintances wonder what impact for good he or she will have on the family and on society at large.



Could this child grow to discover a cure for a disease, or write a best-selling book that inspires and encourages readers, help lead the exploration into space, or bring integrity and wisdom to government of the nation?

No one can predict where each new life will lead, but the opportunities are boundless. And that is part of the excitement as a boy or girl is born. Chuck Swindoll, author, educator, radio preacher and pastor of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas, touches on this theme in his book *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny*. Here is what he wrote:

Take the year 1809. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria; blood was flowing freely. Nobody then cared about babies. But the world was overlooking some terribly significant births.

For example, William Gladstone was born that year. He was destined to become one of England's finest statesmen. That same year, Alfred Lord Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife. The child would one day greatly affect the literary world in a marked manner.

On the American continent, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And not far away in Boston, Edgar Allan Poe began his eventful, albeit tragic, life. It was also in that same year that a physician named Darwin and his wife named their child Charles Robert. And that same year produced the cries of a newborn infant in a rugged log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky. The baby's name? Abraham Lincoln.

If there had been news broadcasts at that time, I'm certain these words would have been heard: "The destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield today." But history was actually being shaped in the cradles of England and America.

Similarly, everyone thought taxation was the big news – when Jesus was born. But a young Jewish woman cradled the biggest news of all: the birth of the Savior.

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Swindoll's brief essay is thought-provoking as we consider just one year and all the births that would impact the world from that unit of time.

Ironically, in that year of 1809, Washington Irving created a tale of a chubby fellow named Saint Nicholas. The little elf, known as Saint Nick, rode his magic horse across New York City. Small enough to fit down chimneys, he left gifts for the good children and switches for the naughty ones.

While versions of his story have continued to our time, maybe we can dig a little deeper and go back a little further to meditate on something even more timeless. This Christmas season, let us consider the humility of the Christ Child, the meaning of His nativity, and the wonder of birth – particularly the New Birth that Christ enables.



As we marvel at the Incarnation of Christmas, let us be mindful that, perhaps, in God's providence, there are little babies around us who may do far more for the Kingdom of God than we may see.

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter