

## Good News of Great Joy

On January 1, 1809 Napoleon Bonaparte, the French military leader and emperor received a telegram informing him that Austria was preparing for war. Later that year the bloody War of the Fifth Coalition was fought in Europe. The international scene was tumultuous. Napoleon was sweeping through Austria and nobody then cared about babies, but the world was overlooking some terribly significant births.



For example, four-time Prime Minister of Great Britain William Gladstone was born in 1809. He was destined to become one of England's finest statesmen. That same year, the much revered British poet, Alfred Tennyson, was born to an obscure minister and his wife. The child would one day greatly affect the literary world in a marked manner. Louise Braille, the blind inventor of a writing system for the blind, was born in France.

On the American continent, Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts. And not far away in Boston, Edgar Allan Poe began his eventful life introducing horror short stories. It was also in that same year that a physician named Darwin and his wife named their child, who would become known for his contributions to the science of evolution, 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 Europe 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.

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."*

Luke 2:8-12

Have a blessed Christmas,

*Pastor Mark*