

“IT JUST HAPPENED!”

Luke 2:15

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

Maybe you’re one of those kind. In the still of the night, the silence is shattered by the shrill of emergency vehicle sirens. You look through the window and see red/blue emergency lights exploding down the street lighting up everything in the area. There has been a fender-bender. You go tearing out of the house and bystanders are already gathering. Without even asking, they tell you: **“IT JUST HAPPENED!”**

Your young children are too small to reach the counter, but not too small to try. While in the bedroom, you hear this crash of a ceramic cookie-jar and go tearing into the kitchen. You check on your youngsters and with this sheepish look on their faces, they tell you: **“IT JUST HAPPENED!”**

There still are hospital waiting rooms where grandparents, relatives, and friends gather to hear the news they’ve all been waiting for. And then the new Dad comes out with tears in his eyes and a newborn grin on his face and tells the group: **“IT JUST HAPPENED!”**

It’s not a waiting room in which we gather today. It’s not a kitchen where ceramic pieces cover the floor. It’s not a curbside where two cars shook hands with their fenders! It’s not even in a room where there’s some protection from the night air. It’s right out in the open with a front-row seat to watch a glorious concert put on by God’s angelic choir! And we are there in person with shepherds who got the message of a New-born Savior and today tell us:

“IT JUST HAPPENED!”

It’s pretty obvious to us what just happened because we’ve heard this before. But the shepherds are new to this news. They are central characters to the Christmas story, but isn’t it ironic – **we really have no clue who they are**. They have no names. They have no histories. They remain anonymous through the test of time.

But every manger scene, including ours, has them in the picture. They did not seek fame that first Christmas night. Little did they know how they would be a permanent part of the Christmas scene. They were just tending sheep. They were doing what their calling in life led them to do. It was just another night like all the rest. Keep the flocks together, keep the flocks grazing, and keep the predators away. That’s all they had to do and that’s all they expected to do.

Until one night – **IT JUST HAPPENED!** An angel of the Lord made a sudden appearance in the sky scaring the “begeebes” out of them. The glory of the Lord enveloped them like a bright fog. They probably covered their eyes and ears in complete terror! Their question had to be **“WHAT’S HAPPENING?”** And they got their answer right from the angel’s mouth: **I BRING YOU GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY THAT WILL BE FOR ALL THE PEOPLE. IT JUST HAPPENED – IN THE TOWN OF DAVID A SAVIOR HAS BEEN BORN TO YOU: HE IS CHRIST THE LORD.**

The concert didn’t go long. There was no standing ovation, there was no encore! As suddenly as the angels came, they were gone without a trace. But their brief appearance made a life-changing impact on the shepherds. They could not just go on with their lives as if nothing happened. They were probably all talking at the same time and couldn’t get a word in edgewise. **“We’ve got to get going”**. **“Don’t worry about the sheep – they’ll be OK...let’s get moving!”**

And no one disagreed. They didn’t say: **“Let’s go to Bethlehem to see IF this thing has happened.”** They knew the report was true. They knew God’s messengers were in that sky that night. They knew the Lord had made it known to them through that angelic concert. And away they went to see what just happened!

Today, many do not celebrate Christmas with the Shepherds. They don’t go to Bethlehem any more than they go to church. They’re too busy. **They go to the mall, but not to the manger.** They go to shop, but not go to the stable. The trappings of this life drop Christ right out of Christmas, if not out of their lives!

You need this Savior. I need this Savior. We all need to go and see **what’s just happened**. There is not one soul here today that can risk staying with the sheep. No one can afford not to go with the shepherds today. For we are sinfully lost, grazing on the tempting fields of sin, death, and Satan. We don’t walk the walk nor do we even talk the talk of following the Word of our God or worshipping his name as God wants. God did not have to reveal anything of what happened to anybody. In fact, he would be justified in not even sending Jesus to be our Savior.

But that's his Christmas love to you! That's why **Jesus became man in the cradle** – to keep God's law for us so when He went **to the cross at Calvary**, he took away all our sins and destroyed death and the devil once and for all. He wants you in heaven to graze on the **fruitful fields** of eternal joys, peace, and blessings of paradise. And the only way to do that is through Jesus Christ, this New-Born King!

You are part of that "all". When the angels announced that **it just happened** that a Savior was born, they were announcing that to you! They were announcing that the answer to sin was here, that the key to life was born, that the way to heaven had arrived. Jesus suffered and died and rose for you. Now through faith in this Christ-child, you and I are forgiven in God's sight waiting to graze in the fields of heaven!

A woman was looking for work and applied for a job taking care of a young couple's firstborn son. She was chosen as one of 5 candidates after being interviewed by the parents. She figured she probably wouldn't get the job with so many applicants. But after a few days, the telephone rang. It was the couple. They offered her the job. She was puzzled, but ecstatic. Sensing her surprise, the couple told her, "**The reason you got the job is because you were the only one who asked to hold our son in your arms.**"

Today, **IT JUST HAPPENED** that **Christ your Savior is born!** Hold him in your arms by faith and never let him go. And it just so happens that one day, you will spend every Christmas with the angels, the shepherds, and your Savior in glory forever!
MERRY CHRISTMAS! AMEN

(Confession of faith: The Christmas Creed, p. 7)