

Advent, Day 19
Read Micah 5:1-8

Thursday, December 20

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephratha, though you are small among the cities of Judah...”

Micah 5:2

PODUNK

I enjoyed watching the one hundredth year celebration of Oklahoma’s statehood. It featured so many from Oklahoma who have gone on to achieve notoriety in the world. One of the things I kept noting was how many of them were from little towns. Tiny places that would normally be labeled ‘Podunk, USA’. Yet from them came some of the biggest names around.

Shannon Miller put Edmond on the map.

Brad Pitt was born in Shawnee.

Norman boasts James Garner. I met him at a bowling alley there, one time.

Maria Tallchief, the wonderful ballerina, is from Fairfax.

Claremore gave us Will Rogers.

Thomas Stafford went from Weatherford to the moon.

Garth Brooks still lives in Yukon.

Reba McEntyre hails from Durant.

Those are just a few of the names that you would know. All from right around our neighborhood.

Several years ago the Sheerar Museum had a display of famous Jazz musicians from Oklahoma. As I walked through the display looking at the pictures and reading their stories, I was amazed to see so many names with whom I am familiar that came from some of the smallest places in the state. Some of the pioneers in American jazz. It was amazing.

Bethlehem, in Judea, was famous for one name in particular. King David had made everyone know the name Bethlehem. He was their native son.

Because of who he was, and the era in which David was King, those who were looking for a Messiah to bring Israel back to its Golden Age thought that it would be only appropriate to have the hoped-for one come from the same place as had David. So little Bethlehem became the symbol for the hopes of Israel.

“Out of you, O Bethlehem, will come a ruler...”

Big things were expected of little Bethlehem.

But those hopes were too small, as it turned out.

They were looking for an earthly king. They were looking for one who would restore Israel to its former glory.

But what happened there was so much larger than any of those limited hopes. So much more than anyone had imagined.

Don’t ever count Podunk out. Don’t ever try to limit what God can do.

It’s always more than we expect.