

“Expect Great Things from God; Attempt Great Things for God.”
Isaiah 54:1-5

Introduction: On August 17, 1761, one of the greatest missionaries that the Baptists have ever known was born. His name was William Carey. Carey was saved, and baptized in 1783, and shortly thereafter started preaching. It was while he was a pastor in Leicester that he travelled to Nottingham and preached at his association's meeting from the text, Isaiah 54:2-3. [May 30, 1792] His sermon title was, "Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God." The sermon stirred up the hearts of his hearers as they had never been before; everyone felt the guilt of keeping the gospel from the perishing...and the need of making an effort to win his ignorant enemies to their Master. At Kettering, the church of Andrew Fuller, the Baptist Missionary Society was organized October 2, 1792...it was formed the first society of modern times for spreading the gospel among the heathen, the parent of all...missionary societies in existence. In 1793, William Carey and another Baptist was appointed as missionaries of the new society. Their destination would be India.

1. In seven years William Carey learned Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, and Dutch.
 2. At Serampore the missionaries set up printing-presses and a large boarding school, and in process of time founded a college.
 3. They preached incessantly, and Carey particularly studied the languages of the country with a measure of success never equaled before or since by any other settler in India.
 4. Carey was the author of a Mahratta grammar, and of a Sanscrit grammar, a Punjabi grammar, a Telinga grammar, and of a Mahratta dictionary, a Bengali dictionary, a Bhotanta dictionary, and a Sanscrit dictionary. He was also the author of several other secular works.
 5. William Carey translated the whole Scripture into six different languages.
 6. William Carey translated the New Testament into 23 languages, besides various dialects in which smaller portions of the sacred text have been printed.
 7. In thirty years Carey and his brethren rendered the Word of God accessible to one-third of the world.
 8. Before William Carey's death, 212,000 copies of the Scriptures were issued from Serampore in 40 different languages, the tongues of 330,000,000 of the human family. His versions are still used today by all denominations of Christians throughout India.
 9. Carey, Marshman, and Ward gave during their stay in India nearly \$400,000 to the spread of the gospel.
 10. Dr. Carey founded churches and mission stations in many parts of India before his death on June 9, 1834. (Notes taken from Cathcart)
- What did William Carey do? He **expected** great things **from** God and **attempted** great things **for** God!
 - "expect" (Webster's)- "to wait for; to look for; to have a previous apprehension of something future; to entertain at least a slight belief that an event will happen..."
 - "attempt" (Webster's)- "To make an effort to effect some object; to make trial or experiment; to try; to endeavor; to use exertion for any purpose..."

Body: The image of Isaiah chapter 54 is that of Jehovah, the faithful husband, forgiving Israel, the unfaithful wife, and restoring her to the place of blessing. The nation was “married” to Jehovah at Mt. Sinai, but she committed adultery by turning to other gods; and the Lord had to abandon her temporarily. However, the prophets promise that Israel will be restored when Messiah comes and establishes His kingdom. What kind of a restoration will it be? For one thing, it is a restoration to *joy* and therefore an occasion for singing (Isa. 54:1a). It will also be a restoration to *fruitfulness* when the nation will increase and need more space (54:1b-3). The nation had been diminished because of the Babylonian invasion, but God would help them multiply again. At the end of this age, only a believing remnant will enter into the kingdom; but the Lord will enlarge the nation abundantly. Israel may feel like a barren woman, unable to have children; but she will increase to the glory of God. God will do for her what He did for Sarah and Abraham. The tents will need to be enlarged, and the desolate cities will be inhabited again!

Paul quoted Isaiah 54:1 in Galatians 4:27 and applied the spiritual principle to the church: Even as God blessed Sarah and the Jewish remnant with children, so He would bless the church, though she is only a small company in the world. Therefore, we may also apply these spiritual promises to the local church in that we should:

1. *"Enlarge the place..." v. 2*
2. *"...stretch forth...thine habitations..." v. 2*
3. *"...lengthen thy cords..." v. 2*
4. *"...strengthen thy stakes..." v. 2*
5. *"...break forth on the right hand and on the left..." v. 3*
6. *"Fear not..." v. 4*

- Luke 1:37- *"For with God nothing shall be impossible."*
- What are some areas that we need to expect great things from God and attempt great things for God?

I. The Evangelization of the Condemned

A. This is a Biblical Exhortation

1. Matthew 28:19- *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"*
2. Mark 16:15- *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."*
3. Luke 14:23- *"And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*
4. Luke 24:47- *"And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*
5. Acts 1:8- *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."*
6. Acts 13:47- *"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."*
7. Proverbs 11:30- *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise."*

B. Lewis Lunsford (1753-1793)

1. Lewis Lunsford began preaching the gospel in Virginia about the age of 17.
2. A few years after his entrance into the ministry, he left his native county, and extended his influence through all the counties of the Northern Neck of Virginia. In Westmoreland, Northumberland, and Lancaster, especially, did the Lord make his ministrations effectual, and believers were daily added to the church.
3. Several churches were gathered as the fruit of his toils; the most prominent of which are, Nomini, Moratico, and Wicomico. When the Moratico Church was constituted, in the year 1778, he was unanimously chosen to be their pastor. This relation he sustained as long as he lived.
4. His was a heart overflowing with sympathy for the wretched, and he was ready to disregard his own comfort and advantage to administer to their spiritual advantage. Over one of the large water-courses of the lower country, three miles wide, he once paddled a small canoe with a garden pale, rather than allow himself to fail in reaching his appointment.
5. Mr. Toler wrote of Lewis Lunsford: "He journeyed much to preach the gospel in this State, and his rides were very lengthy. I have known him ride one hundred and twenty miles, in fifty successive hours, to reach his meetings...He used to say, his life was a continual chase through the world; and so it was."
6. Day by day, and often late at night, he was found in his journeys — exposed to the [weather]...Once he is represented as traveling on a tour of preaching to the Valley of Virginia. When he left home the rain was falling, but he hesitated not, pressing on until, drenched and cold, he was compelled to stop for a season. Having warmed himself by the fire, he continued until night, when he commenced preaching services...the next day he urged his way, preaching day and night through the tour. Crowds attended his ministry. Much excitement in spiritual things was awakened, "the people," says Mr. Toler, "wondering at the gracious words that proceeded from his mouth." Tours of this kind, in the same region of country, were repeated, and with marked success. In a single neighborhood several were baptized, and a flourishing church was built up.
7. Semple wrote of Lunsford: "His countenance, lighted up by an inward flame, seemed to shed beams of light wherever he turned. His voice, always harmonious, often seemed to be tuned by descending seraphs. His style and his manner were so sublime and so energetic that he was indeed like an ambassador of the skies, sent down to command all men every here to repent. He was truly a messenger of peace, and by him the tidings of peace were communicated to multitudes."
8. On one occasion, a bandit attended Mr. Lunsford's meeting, with sticks and staves to attack him. Just as he was about to begin to preach they approached him...This produced a great uproar, and some skirmishes. Mr. Lunsford retired to a house. The persecutors pursued him. He shut himself up...One of them desired to have the privilege of conversing with...He was let in, and did converse. When he came out he wore a new face. His party asked him the result. "You had better," said he, "converse with him yourselves."
9. Mr. Toler wrote: "He preached as if he ne'er should preach again, and as a dying man to dying men!"

II. The Establishment of Churches

A. This is a Biblical Exhortation

1. Titus 1:5- *"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee"*
2. Acts 14:23- *"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed."*
3. Romans 15:20- *"Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation"*
4. II Corinthians 10:16- *"To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand."*

B. Isaac McCoy (1784-1846)

1. In 1817, he received an appointment as missionary to the Indians of Indiana and Illinois.
2. In 1803 he was married to Christiana Polk, daughter of Capt. Polk, whose wife and [3] children were captured by the Ottowas [for three years]. Mr. McCoy and his wife were afterwards missionaries to that tribe.
3. William Cathcart said of the McCoy's: "Mr. McCoy and his wife entered upon this missionary work with all the zeal and strength of faith that characterized the life and labors of Mr. and Mrs. Judson."
4. Deprivations, sicknesses, and sorrows such as but few mortals know were not strangers to them. Mr. McCoy rode hundreds of miles through the wilderness, and swam the swollen streams, lying on the wet ground at night, for the sake of carrying forward his missions.
5. He went on horseback to Washington several times to interest Congress in measures beneficial to the Indian. Many months would be occupied in these journeys.
6. One of the severest trials that Mr. McCoy was called to bear was that during his absence from home sickness and sometimes death would visit his family. Five of his children were called by death at different times while he was absent from home.
7. In 1818, Isaac McCoy wrote this letter to the Baptist Board, which stated: "Although I have travelled more than 1,900 miles...and have preached more than one hundred sermons, yet I have not been able to preach one sermon in Edwards, Davis, or Dubois counties...In less than three weeks, I expect to have the sole charge of five churches, which are situated as follows: from White River church to High Bank is twenty miles, thence to Wabash twenty-four, thence to Maria twelve, thence to Prairie Creek forty, from Prairie Creek to White River church is seventy miles."
8. Continued: "This extensive route lies through an immense population, all destitute of preaching by our ministers. There are also two or three places where I think churches might in a little time be formed, but there is none to blow the trumpet to assemble them. Now if I attend to preaching to these people, the Indians must be neglected, and if I attend to the Indians, with whom shall I leave these few sheep in the wilderness?"
9. Continued: "Should I be so happy as to embrace a brother in this work, it would be my wish to form a family establishment where, while one of us would be on a

preaching tour, the other could be father to his children, and could attend closely to the ultimate object of the mission. I am very desirous to hear from the Board something on this subject.”

10. Luke 10:2- *“Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.”*

11. In June, 1846, as he was returning from Jeffersonville, where he had preached, he was caught in a rain-storm, from the effects of which he died in a few days at his home in Louisville.

12. His last words were, “Tell the brethren, never to let the Indian mission decline.”

C. Shubal Stearns (1706-1771)

1. He commenced his labors [at Sandy Creek] with building a house of worship, and constituting a church [November 22, 1755] of sixteen persons.

2. Robert Baylor Semple wrote: [from 1755-1757] "These, uniting their labors with the others, a powerful and extensive work commenced, and Sandy Creek Church soon swelled from 16 to 606."

3. Morgan Edwards wrote: Soon after the neighborhood was alarmed and the Spirit of God listed to blow as a mighty rushing wind in so much that in three years' time they had increased to three churches and upwards of 900 communicants.

4. Sandy Creek Baptist Church, in seventeen years, is become mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, to forty-two churches, from which sprang 125 ministers. (George W. Paschal)

D. John Waller (1741-1802)

1. Waller spent more than 113 days in four different jails in Virginia.

2. John Waller died at 62 years old having preached 35 years.

3. Waller baptized more than 2,000 people in Virginia. He ordained 27 preachers. He constituted 18 churches. For many years he pastored five churches at one time.

E. Look at the cities in your area that need a church! [See Print Outs]

Conclusion: What will happen when we do not expect great things from God and attempt great things for God?

1. In 1831, four Nez Perce and Flathead Indians came to St. Louis seeking to learn the secret of the white man's success, convinced that the white man's God was more potent than their own. These Indians were Black Eagle, Rabbit Skin Leggings, No Horns on His Head, and Man of the Morning. They were members of a declining Indian tribe in Oregon that were searching to find the one, true, triune God. Their request was that the missionaries be sent among them to tell them of the white man's God. (Catherine Millard, pg. 183)

2. In 1866 there appeared in a lecture by missionary Henry Spalding an account of the sorrowful appeal of one of these Indians to General Clark when they were leaving to go back to their own people. Said the Indian: "I come to you over a trail of many moons from the setting sun. I came with one eye partly open, for more light for my people who sit in darkness. I go back with both eyes closed. How can I go back blind to my people? I made my way to you with strong arms through many enemies and strange lands. I go back with both arms broken and empty. My people sent me to get the white man's Book from Heaven. You took me where you allow your women to dance, as we do not ours, and the Book was not

there. You took me where they worship the great Spirit with candles, and the Book was not there. You showed me the images of good spirits and pictures of the good land beyond. But the Book was not among them. I am going back the long, sad trail to my people of the dark land. You make my feet heavy with burdens of gifts, and my moccasins will grow old in carrying them. But the Book is not among them. When I tell my poor, blind people after one more snow in the big Council that I did not bring the Book, no word will be spoken by our old men or by our young braves. One by one they will rise up and go out in silence. My people will die in darkness, and they will go on the long path to other hunting grounds. No white man will go with them, and no white man's Book, to make the way plain. I have no more words." (Catherine Millard, pg. 184)

3. The only ones that I know of that went to them was Marcus and Narcissa Whitman, but they were Protestants.