



# WATCHMAN'S TRUMPET



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## FROM THE MISSION DIRECTOR

Hello,

I welcome you to this new month and present to you October 2024 edition of Watchman's Trumpet. The theme of this month's edition is "Gideon's Army".

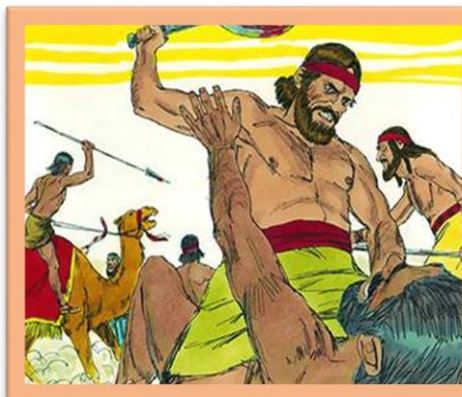
The prelude to Gideon's story revealed how God uses tough times to get our attention. It is still happening today. As the story unfolds, we are told that the Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD handed them over to Midian for seven years. The Midianites were extremely powerful and oppressed the Israelites mercilessly. Every year around harvest time, the nomadic Midianites would invade Israel. They would come in like locusts, ravaging the land. What they couldn't carry with them they destroyed. The Bible reports that it was so bad many of the Israelites left their homes to live in caves and strongholds, fearing for their lives. This went on for seven years. Finally, the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help. He first sends an unnamed prophet to call them back to total surrender and full devotion. But His plan also included a most unlikely man named Gideon. He is the weakest link in his clan, the youngest in his family. He doesn't have any authority to call out the cavalry from his own tribe, let alone from others. Yet God said "I will be with you," and "You will strike Midian down [as if it were] one man." Thus, Gideon was given an undeniable commission and told the remarkable results that he would achieve in advance, guaranteed by unrivalled partnership with the Lord. Gideon's battle strategy is one of the strangest battle strategies in history.

*With his 300, he went out with trumpets, torches, and jars to meet the marauding Midianites. God sent confusion into the ranks of the enemy so that they began attacking each other. When it was over, 120,000 Midianites had killed one another and the other 15,000 fled. Everyone else including those that had earlier been dismissed came out in pursuit of the enemy and totally destroyed them. God answered Israel's prayers. He used a common man who believed God. The story of Gideon and his army of 300 serves as a fantastic reminder that the faith of a few people can go a long way in changing lives around us, and even the course of history itself. We from it learn that every trial in the lives of God's people is tailored to draw us closer to God. C.S. Lewis said "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains. It's His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." Finally, it became clear that success is determined by God's power, not ours.*

*My pray as you read this edition of Watchman's Trumpet is that it will increase your capacity to trust and depend on God more, and that all problems in your life at present will be solved by our omnipotent God in Jesus name. Welcome!*

## OPPRESSION OF CHOSEN PEOPLE

*"And the children of Israel did evil in the*



## Inside...

About Watchman Outreach	
Mission	3
Watchman Prayer Hour	3
Fight for freedom	4
Distractions from within	5
The end of oppressors and oppression	6
Missionary of the Month	8

*sight of the LORD: and the LORD delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years. And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: and because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds"Judges 6:1-2*

The conquest of the Promised Land led by Joshua appears to be a general one. Each tribe is still expected to mop up and clear pockets of resistance that existed within their different inheritances. This they failed to do due to lack of faith in God and disobedience to His commandment. The book of Judges recorded the consequences of this negligence in a cyclical form revolving around degeneration into idol worship, abandonment by God, oppression by their enemy, repentance, and then salvation, followed by deliverance. Usually, God will raise a deliverer and a judge to intervene and help deliver His people. But in most cases they soon relapse into disobedience and idolatry after the death of the deliverer or sometimes in his lifetime

as we have in the case of Gideon. About seven cycles of these were recorded in the book of Judges. In Gideon's case, his call was preceded by seven years of peculiar kind of oppression by Midianites.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Peculiarity of Midianites' oppression
2. Beginning of rescue mission
3. Forgetting the past

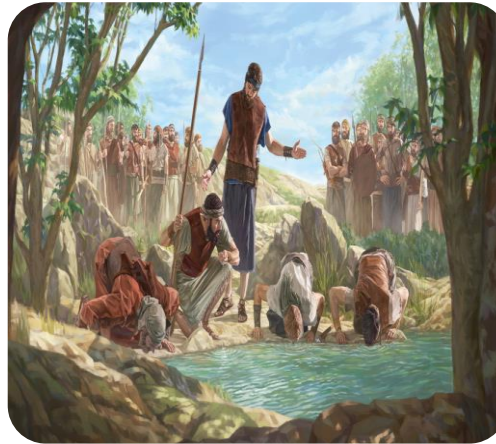
### 1. Peculiarity of Midianites' oppression

*"And they encamped against them, and destroyed the increase of the earth, till thou come unto Gaza, and left no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. For they came up with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it. And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites; and the children of Israel cried unto the LORD."* **Judges 6:4-6**

*"A nation that you have not known shall eat up the fruit of your ground and of all your labors, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually, It shall eat the offspring of your cattle and the fruit of your ground, until you are destroyed; it also shall not leave you grain, wine, or oil, the increase of your herds or the young of your flock, until they have caused you to perish."* **Deuteronomy 28:33, 51**

The seven year of Israel's oppression by Midianites was a peculiar one. The particular kind of oppression in this instance was directed against their means of sustenance. The oppression was so much that they could not live in their own house for fear of sufferings or death. They lived in mountains, caves and strong holds. Whenever Israel sowed, Midianites would come at harvest time and destroy their increase including

livestock. Deprivation of means of livelihood remains an old stratagem of keeping a people in perpetual subjection. We can here deduce that whatever gives our shoulder to labour and denied our mouth the taste of its fruits cannot be of God. God's plan is for us to eat of the fruits of our labour and build a house to live in it. It is also clear that poverty, disasters and calamities are works of the devil, and sometimes part of the wages of sin. The wages of sin is death. Death which rewards sinful acts and forsaking God may take on any form. It may include death of resources and finances. Provided all who are experiencing such are ready to part with their sins, God is ready to deliver them if they call upon His name like Israel did.

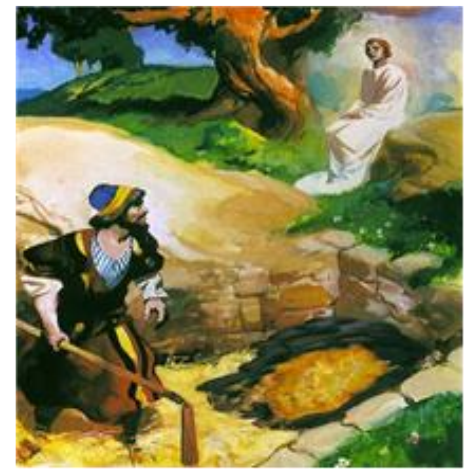


### 2. Beginning of rescue mission

*"And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which was in Ophrah, that pertained unto Joash the Abiezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."* **Judges 6:11-12**

*"For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance."* **Psalms 94:14**

Eventually, following Israel's cry to God, God sent an angel to appoint a deliverer for them. The deliverer Gideon was found threshing wheat, intending to hide it from the Midianites.



The angel gave Gideon an hero's salute but Gideon had his doubts, The angel told him *"The Lord be with you, thou mighty man of valour"* Gideon stated that if God was indeed with the nation, how was it that they no longer experience the kind of miracles which their fathers told them about? From this account we can infer that the secrets of signs, miracles and wonders, the victory of a life of fruitfulness, profitability and victory over our enemies is the presence of God. Gideon knew that except that God has abandoned them they would not have been confronted with the kind of problem they faced with the Midianites. We must jealously guide and treasure divine presence. If God be for us, none can succeed against us.

### 3. Forgetting the past

*"And Gideon said unto him, Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt? but now the LORD hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites. And the LORD looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"* **Judges 6:13-14**

*"Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."* **Isaiah 43:18, 19**



## ABOUT WATCHMAN OUTREACH MISSION

Watchman Outreach Mission as envisioned fundamentally comprises of men and women of faith who watch over one another and together watch for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Next to this primary assignment is an equally important responsibility of bringing others into the same state of watchfulness and readiness as the coming of the Lord draws near. Ours is a trans-ministerial, trans-denominational mission. Our core values include expository teaching, prayer and counselling. We train in principles and practice of Christian discipleship and equip for effective Kingdom Service.

The Lord Jesus Christ in one of His parable said “*While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept*” **Mathew 25:5**. Watchman Outreach Mission is a response of faith to this and similar warnings about events in the last days. Our response is based on the premise that prophecies, visions and revelations about the future such as the one documented in the Lord’s parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins are sign-posts by which men are warned to keep vigil to avoid disastrous end. We serve to wake up the church and men everywhere to remain alert and watch for the Lord’s return.

The Mission, based in Ibadan, Nigeria, was launched in 2009 and its maiden outing took place on the 20th November of the same year. On that day, we partnered with All Nations Evangelical Ministry (ANEM), Akobo, Ibadan for Evangelistic and Medical Mission Outreach to Idi - Ose Village on Arulogun - Olorunda Road in Lagelu Local Government, Ibadan.

In the years that followed we networked with churches and other Christian groups too to implement our mandate which include conducting gospel outreaches, discipleship training for new converts, organizing and facilitating workers and ministerial training, conducting administrative reviews in churches and ministries, writing of proposals for reforms and church growth strategies that can enhance social cohesion, improve church finances and foster overall development, unity and growth of such ministries; monitoring and/or supervision of the implementation of such reforms and strategies.

Some of these Christian groups and ministries include with Christ Apostolic Church, Oke - Ife in Ajangboju, Ibadan, Nigerian Military Christian Fellowship, Adekunle Fajuyi Cantonment Chapter in Oyo - State Nigeria, Christ Gospel Mission International, Light of Jesus Evangelistic Ministry with branches in different cities in South Western Nigeria, and Ark of Salvation Church of Christ (ASCC) with headquarters at Molade, Monatan Ibadan.

Till date, although partnered ministries change from time to time depending on the leading we receive from the Lord, we remain committed to our main purpose and vision; that of service to the church and in the world to wake up men everywhere and encourage them to remain alert and watch for the Lord’s return. Through our activities, souls had been saved, believers edified and church workers’ spiritual growth and development enhanced, all to the glory of God.

## WATCHMAN PRAYER HOUR



### *Prayer Points - For October 2024*

1. Thank God for the lessons in the story of Gideon’s battle against the Midianites
2. Pray that every mark and trace of sin and compromise in your life should be uprooted by the Holy Spirit
3. Pray for grace to live a consistently faithful life
4. Pray for grace to always seek God’s guidance, presence and partnership in life’s battle
5. Pray that all enemy attack on your resources and means of livelihood will be eliminated
6. Pray that God will send His terror and spirit of confusion into the camp of your enemies
7. Pray for focus and freedom from distractions when on assignment for God
8. Thank God for answered prayers

“..... *men ought always to pray, and not to faint;*’ **Luke 18:1**

**May the Lord hear and answer all our prayers - AMEN!**

**Watchman Prayer Hour** holds every Saturday from 10.30am - 12.00MD. We invite you to join us at our office at Amazing Grace House, Joy Estate, Olorunda -Abaa, Ibadan . Oyo - State. Follow us on any of our social media platforms and send your inquiries or prayer requests to any of our digital addresses.

# FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

God loves orderliness. The first thing God led Gideon to do was get rid of idols from his own father's house so they will not be a hindrance to his effectiveness as Israel's judge. We have no right to demand from others what we have not effected in our own lives

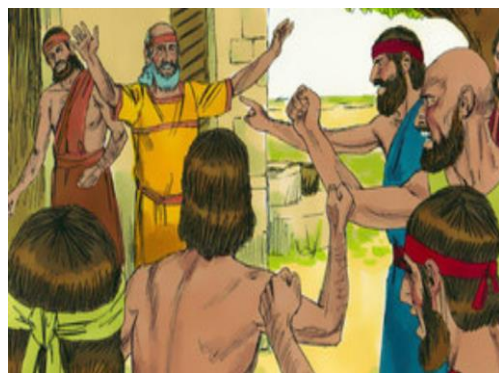
We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Charity beginning at home
2. Many are called but few are chosen
3. Confusion in enemy's camp

## 1. Charity beginning at home

*"And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Take thy father's young bullock, even the second bullock of seven years old, and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath, and cut down the grove that is by it: And build an altar unto the LORD thy God upon the top of this rock, in the ordered place, and take the second bullock, and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down. Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the LORD had said unto him: and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night."* **Judges 6:25-27**

Having been reconciled to God and commissioned by Him, Gideon needed to institute the same in his own family. We cannot hope to be agents of transformation in the community if the ideals we desire to project has not been accepted or established in our house and family. Those who will be used by God to rule in the kingdom must have been found to be good rulers in their own house.



This Gideon carried out in the night in the company of some of his men. He built a new altar on the top of a rock which the Lord showed him using the woods of Baal's grove as fuel and bullocks from his father's herds. When the men of the city arose in the morning and found Baal altar gone, they gave sentence to kill Gideon but his father intervened and told the people to leave the matter to Baal himself. If it was a god as it was presumed to be, it should avenge itself. The implication of this was that deep in the heart of Joash Gideon's father, there was a conviction that Baal was no god but he was afraid to publicly acknowledge it. Our commitment to well doing should be profound because there may be some who will be encouraged or embolden by our stand for the Lord to stand too Philippians 1:13-14.

## 2. Many are called but few chosen

*"For many are called, but few are chosen."* **Mathew 22:14**

Next we have a description of how Gideon's battle against the Midianites was fought and won by Israel. Gideon had raised 32,000 fighters and gained enough assurance from God. Now they camped near a well opposite Midianites, ready to launch an attack but God stated that the people are too many and would want them trimmed down lest Israel attribute their victory to their numbers and to the arm of flesh. The Lord told Gideon to discharge the fearful. He was to announce that whichever of them was afraid should return home. By that proclamation 22,000 left remaining only 10,000. The fact that the fearful are disqualified from the kingdom is very clear from the scriptures Revelation 21:8.

The Lord stated that the 10,000 people are still too many. God commanded Gideon to bring them to the stream to drink and observe them. Some of them bowed upon their knees to drink while only 300 lapped like dogs, putting their hands to their mouth. The Lord told Gideon that by the 300 which lapped He would deliver Israel from the Midianites. They are the people for the job. The manner of lapping of these selected few shows how satisfied they are with little and basics. What they took into their mouth would barely enough to satisfy their thirst. They are men who are not looking for convenience or pleasure. Believers are encouraged to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

## 3. Confusion in enemy's camp

The precise instruction which Gideon led in demonstration and the people followed was that they were to in unison blow trumpets and break the earthen pot to reveal simultaneous a full glare of the light of lamp within the pots and by so doing strike terror into the enemies' heart and confuse them. As they did so the Midianites fled in confusion. Since it was night and by the operations of God, they turned their sword on one another. Other Israelites who had earlier departed from Gideon's army came together to join in the pursuit. Gideon called upon Ephraim to block the exit through the passage in Jordan and join in the battle to destroy the enemies of God's people. The two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb were captured and slain. The gospel is compared to light and trumpet. The gospel is compared to light and trumpet. The preaching of the gospel is compared to the shining forth of light out of an earthen vessel which is the human body. The joining of those who were earlier demobilized in the pursuit and battle to get rid of the enemies illustrated that in the kingdom there is work for all to do even when it is not everyone that is labeled "worker".

## DISTRACTIONS FROM WITHIN

*“And the men of Ephraim said unto him, Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not, when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites? And they did chide with him sharply”*  
**Judges 8:1**

*“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”* **2 Timothy 2:4**

One of the strategies of the devil to slow us down or reverse our victory when we are on the battlefield for the Lord is to create distractions through unfounded allegations, accusations and resentments within our ranks. It happened to Gideon.

During the mopping up exercises, towards the end of Gideon’s warfare against the Midianites, some of those for whom he fought, instead of supporting him and cooperating with him began to distract him. Day by day God chooses men to accomplish particular tasks. Some of these tasks have to do with helping to fight the enemy of those who when under oppression sought God’s face for help. That being as it is, we should never expect that all people, even among those we are trying to defend and for whom we are risking our lives would approve or appreciate our efforts and happily cooperate with us. There will be some that for reasons of contempt, envy or outright manipulation by the enemies or spiritual forces will set themselves against our purpose or outrightly oppose and contend with us primarily to distract us. Such was the case of Ephraimites, Succoth and Peniel. The gravest mistake anyone contending for victory like Hannah



in Shiloh can make is to get involved in petty arguments and allow himself to be distracted; doing so will not only half the victory, but will give the enemy time to regroup and rearm.

We shall consider two subtopics:

1. Soft answer turning away wrath
2. Faint yet pursuing

### 1. Soft answer turning away wrath

*“And he said unto them, What have I done now in comparison of you? Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer? God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb: and what was I able to do in comparison of you? Then their anger was abated toward him, when he had said that.”* **Judges 8:2-3**

*“A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.”* **Proverbs 15:1**

Contending for victory under calls for focus and ordering or reordering of our priorities. Ephraimites were the first of these trio that tries to distract Gideon. They contended (argued) in strongest language possible regarding why Gideon did not call them to join in the fight against the Midianites and only sent messengers to summon them after the victory have been won and the enemies are fleeing. The answer Gideon gave which pacified them, paraphrased, portrayed Ephraimites as great heroes, even greater than Gideon’s family and that their contribution to the battle by

capturing the two princes of Midian Oreb and Zeeb was a great one. We learn from here how sometimes a soft answer can turn away wrath. When people are attempting to distract us from full accomplishment of a God-ordained commission, it is not the time for self-defense or time to join issues with distracters. There are times we may need to yield to maintain our focus and keep our objectives. There are times we may stoop to conquer.

### 2. Faint yet pursuing

*“And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, he, and the three hundred men that were with him, faint, yet pursuing them.”*  
**Judges 8:4**

*“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ”* **2 Timothy 2:3**

After this event, Gideon continues to pursue the remaining Midianites who had passed over Jordan with his three hundred men chosen by God. They were faint yet pursuing. We instinctively see the wisdom of God in choosing the most rugged among the troops that Gideon mobilized. God knew ahead of time that those who could effectively obtain victory on behalf of Israelites are those who can continue to push for victory in the Lord’s battle in the face of severe personal bodily need or desire for rest and hunger. Two things worked together here. First they have personal qualities which God who created them had seen ahead of time that was required to get the job done. But two, the Lord who called and choose them provided the grace in response to their faith and self-denying capabilities to carry on. Individual talents and natural traits handed over to God and under-guarded by God’s grace will often outreach the bounds imposed by natural limitation. We then need to cooperate with God by demonstrating infinite faith and confidence in Him so that He can supply the grace we need to amplify our innate natural talents to accomplish His tasks.

## THE END OF OPPRESSORS AND OPPRESSION

*“For surely there is an end; and thine expectation shall not be cut off.”*  
**Proverbs 23:18**

At the peak of the battle to completely root out the Midianites and their influence, Gideon’s army require logistics support, especially food. Gideon approaches one of the Cities closest to where he was. Unfortunately, instead of helping him and his men, the Israelites they approach insulted them. Their end was disastrous.



Gideon eventually won the battle. All the enemies with God’s help were destroyed. He later returned to discipline the cities that insulted him. Unfortunately, Gideon’s end was not so glorious. He relapse into idolatry and led the nation astray. He that thinks he is standing should take heed lest he fall 1 Corinthians 10:12.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Contempt of Succoth and Peniel
2. Judging the oppressors
3. Gideon’s building of what he destroyed

### 1. Contempt of Succoth and Peniel

*“And he said unto the men of Succoth, Give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me; for they be faint, and I am pursuing after Zebah and*

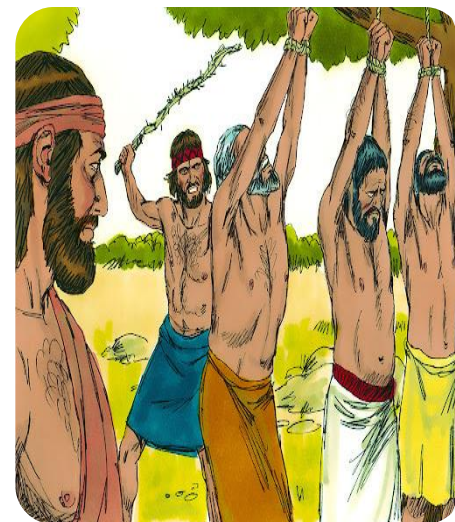


*Zalmunna, kings of Midian. And the princes of Succoth said, Are the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hand, that we should give bread unto thine army?”***Judges 8:5-6**

Gideon attempted to raise rations for his men from among the citizens. In responding, those in Succoth and Peniel, displayed contempt and indifference. Their disparaging statements show their insensitivity to the plight of suffering humanity and disregard for God’s project and kingdom plans. It is worst when considered against a backdrop of the fact that they themselves stand like others in the nation at the time to greatly benefit from securing complete victory over the Midianites. If the Bible enjoins us to be mindful of entertaining strangers and providing gleanings in our fields for destitute, fatherless and widows, how much more should we be responsive to our brethren in need, not to talk of those like ministers of the Gospel who have placed upon themselves the burden of care and watchfulness over us and over others in the fellowship.

Jesus stated that by love for one another shall men know that we are His disciples. The characteristics of believers’ love for one another as indicated in the scriptures involves social demonstration of affection in giving drinks to the thirsty, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and visiting the infirmed. When we do these things, Christ own it as done

to Him and when we deprive brethren of them, He takes it into account as if our denial was done to Himself Matthew 25:31-46. Insensitivity to the needs and hurts of others are the leading reasons for which the rich man in Christ’s story of the rich man and Lazarus end up in hell and the main reasons why Gideon chastised the men of Succoth with briers and thorns, and destroyed Peniel. Whatever opportunities God gave to us, it is to help others and support the needy. If we abuse these opportunities or fail to use them for the purpose for which God brought them across our ways, we stand the risk of forfeiting them altogether. Gideon disciplined the elders of Succoth, about 77 of them but slew the men of Peniel and destroyed their tower.



*“He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad”.*

**Matthew 12:30**



It must have been done according to the measure of neglect of responsibility which each city demonstrated. To him who much is given, much more shall be required.

## 2. Judging the oppressors

*“Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna, What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? And they answered, As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king. And he said, They were my brethren, even the sons of my mother: as the LORD liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you. Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, Rise thou, and fall upon us: for as the man is, so is his strength. And Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna, and took away the ornaments that were on their camels' necks” Judges 8:18-19, 21*

*“But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries.” Exodus 23:22*

After capturing the two Midian kings - Zebah and Zalmunna pursued by Gideon across Jordan and after imposing appropriate judgment and sanctions against Succoth and Peniel for their insensitivity and contempt to national cause, Gideon gave sentence against these two kings. They were responsible for the murder of his brethren in Tabor which may

have been the result of earlier oppression of the Midianites before the table turned against them. His slain brethren may have been among those who attempted to contest or contend against Midianites' oppression and impoverishment.

Gideon instructed Jether his first born to execute the sentence of killing these kings but for fear he could not. He had delegated to him the role of avenger of blood but his youthful weakness override his sense of duty. It may also have been an attempt at instructing his younger generation on how to deal with the enemies. Youth upbringing must feature majorly in our programmes in the kingdom. As we train and arm ourselves to serve God, we must bring our children along and encourage their involvement. Gideon carried out the execution himself.



## 3. Gideon's building of what he destroyed

*“For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.” Galatians 2:18*

However, the end of Gideon was not as glorious as the beginning. He veered into idol worship and polygamy and by so doing left discord and disorder behind in his own immediate family. If we have started the race of life well, we should endeavor to end well.



Israelites wanted Gideon to become their king and his sons to follow in his steps but Gideon declined. He recognized that God was Israel's king and he, a mere instrument in God's hand in securing victory for His people. We must not at the height of human ovation attempt to ascribe to ourselves glory for a victory that belongs to the Lord. We need to watch against ego problems after great exploit. However, Gideon secured from the spoils ear and golden rings worth 1700shekels of gold and ornaments, collars, purple raiment and chains. With them he made an ephod which he put in Orphrah his city. It became an object of false worship and divination which turned the nation away from allegiance and commitment to God even in Gideon's lifetime and constitute a stumbling block to him and his house; the very house from where he has routed the worship of Baal. We must watch our hearts and watch against sins that easily besets us. If we build again the sinful things we have earlier destroyed, we become transgressors. Gideon's loss of self-control and inordinate desire became apparent in the end. He married many wives and even had a concubine in Shechem who gave birth to a son called Abimelech. From the other wives he has seventy sons. The “poly-war” which ensued became a source of great lamentation and sorrows to many after his death.

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**John Williams** was born son of John Williams and Hannah on 27 June 1796 at Tottenham High Cross, London. His ancestors on his father's side had been Baptists for many generations. In 1814 he underwent an evangelical conversion and became a member of the Tabernacle Church (Calvinistic Methodist). He was taught writing and arithmetic at Lower Edmonton, and grammar and exegesis by Rev. Matthew Wilk. In 1816 he volunteered for missionary service with the London Missionary Society.

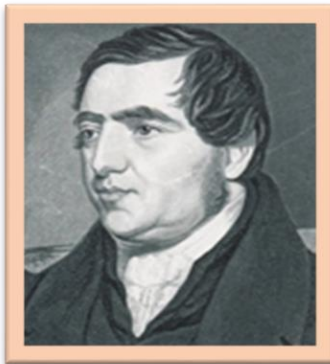
John married Mary Chauner on October 29, 1816. After the marriage, the couple started their journey to the Society Islands. Their first missionary post was on the island of Raiatea. They had a friendly welcome by King Tamatoa, a monarch who had been waiting for someone to give them the message of salvation. John and Mary served on Raiatea for 5 years. Their work resulted in a congregation of over 2,000 people. Hundreds were baptized. Naked cannibals started wearing clothes. Idols were destroyed. The missionaries' next stop was Raratonga in the Cook Islands. Although they experienced success, they endured many difficulties. Malaria and tropical diseases caused Mary to lose several babies. The couple had 10 children. Only three lived to be adults.

After Raratonga was evangelized, they went to the Samoan Islands. Williams used Jesus as an example and sent out native disciples two by two to reach the villages. A ship, *The Messenger of Peace*, was built, and Williams traveled to numerous islands; many people responded to the gospel. In December 1821 he and his wife paid a three-month visit to Sydney, where he preached and addressed several public meetings.

In 1833, John and Mary traveled back to England for the first time. John had become a celebrity. Huge crowds came to hear him preach. Young men and women resolved to become missionaries. In 1838 he returned to Sydney in the mission ship. Having recently given evidence before the committee of the House of Commons on Aborigines, he was influential in the establishment of the local

## MISSIONARY OF THE MONTH

**JOHN WILLIAMS**  
1796 - 1839



Aborigines Protection Society, and was also responsible for founding an Auxiliary Missionary Society in Sydney.

In April 1838, the couple left for the islands again. On arrival, the Williams decided to evangelize New Hebrides islands (now Vanuatu) where the most savage cannibals in the Pacific lived. Leaving Mary at the mission station, he landed on the island of Erromango on November 20, 1839. He was brutally beaten with war club until dead. The cannibals ate his body. A memorial stone was erected on the island of Rarotonga in 1839 and is still there. At a later date, when his remains were recovered, all that was left was a collection of bones. These were shipped and buried in Apia, Samoa. A monument was erected in front of the LMS church of Apia, and the six-storey headquarters of the Congregational Church of Samoa was named after him, commemorating his work in the Samoan islands. In December 2009 descendants of John and Mary Williams travelled to Erromango to accept the apologies of descendants of the cannibals in a ceremony of reconciliation. To mark the occasion, Dillons Bay in Erromango was renamed Williams Bay.

### SCRIPTURE FOR MEDITATION

*"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." 2 Timothy 2:3*

## SONG OF THE MONTH

### THE SWORD OF THE LORD AND GIDEON

1. Gideon, with three hundred soldiers,  
Once a mighty host withstood,  
Camping in the Moreh Valley—  
An uncounted multitude.  
But the Lord was helping Gideon,  
And his brave and trusting band,  
Armed with trumpets, lamps and pitchers,  
Went, obeying God's command:

Refrain:

*Blow thy trumpet, break thy pitcher,  
Hold thy lamp within thy hand along the line;*

*Cry, "The sword of the Lord and Gideon!"  
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon,"  
"The sword of the Lord and Gideon,"  
And the vict'ry shall be thine.*

2. God was mighty to deliver,  
And they fought without a sword,  
Wielding naught but torch and trumpet  
And Jehovah's mighty Word.  
Gideon's men were but a handful,  
Yet on God they could rely,  
And the army, panic-stricken,  
Fled before their battle cry. [Refrain]
3. Go ye forth to bloodless battle  
In the army of the Lord;  
Seek the triumph of his kingdom;  
Sound his name with one accord.  
Break thy darkened earthly vessels;  
Flash the light of sacred Word;  
Flash the light of holy living;  
Let the voice of God be heard. [Refrain]

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