

God's secret and continuous care of His people

Introduction. Chapter 1 describes the increase in numbers of Hebrews; even after the attempt of the Pharaoh to oppress them they still grew in number. God was secretly and continuously caring for His people and fulfilling His promise to Abram to make his people numerous (Gen. 15:1-5).

Israel (also known as Jacob) had gone down to Egypt with all his family at the express command of God with the promise of becoming a great nation (first given to Abram) being reaffirmed (Gen. 46:3-4). Yet there were 400 years from God's initial promise and His people were suffering terribly. There is no indication in the text that they were in any way being punished by God. They were where God had sent them and the promise of becoming a great nation with their own land had not been withdrawn. Clearly God's timing and purposes were not what they expected (Is. 55:8) even though it was foretold by God (Gen.15:13-14). But even in the darkness of their oppression the secret and continuous care of God was evident.

2:1-11. God uses women to enact His extraordinary care.

- a. In chapter 1 it is the Hebrew midwives who defy the King's order to kill the Hebrew male babies by drowning.
- b. Pharaoh's plan to kill the male babies did not account for God using the Hebrew women to save many male babies (many male babies must have survived as they were still a large community when they finally left Egypt, Exod. 13).
- c. God used Moses' mother, his sister and even Pharaoh's daughter to save his appointed leader Moses.

Theological reflection.

- a. James addresses his Christian readers as the 'twelve tribes scattered among the nations' (Jas.1:1) drawing parallels with Exodus. The Church of Jesus Christ are God's people scattered throughout the world.
- b. We, like the Hebrews in Exodus, cry out to God, '**why?**' when we face difficulties and suffering. Like them we often do not get an answer to our request for knowledge. But we can experience God's care even in the midst of difficulties and suffering.

The question that God always answers is: **what can we learn God, from this situation about your loving care?**

The Hebrews were called to trust God to rescue them and to obey His command to leave Egypt.

Throughout Genesis and Exodus, we see the hand of God caring for His people as a whole and individual members.

The Hebrews and we need to learn:

- i. to trust God that He is working out His plans in all situations (Rm. 8:28-30)
- ii, to trust God that He will use us to bring about His purposes as we make ourselves available to Him (Heb. 13:1-3)
- iii. to trust God as we wait patiently for Him to fulfil His promises (Heb. 6:13)