

LENT 2024

# JOURNEY to FREEDOM

FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH

**READ: Exodus 9:1-12**

***'Thus says the Lord, the God of the Hebrews:  
Let my people go, so that they may worship me.'*** Exodus 9:1

Not again! I confess that this is my automatic reaction to many situations from damaged vegetables in my shopping delivery order to the pinging of my phone when I'm trying to concentrate on something. Perhaps you had the same thought when reading today's passage. Not again! Not another day reading about the plagues! How many days will this go on?

But, through each plague, God reveals more about Himself. The first few plagues demonstrated that God could do miraculous things just as the Egyptian magicians could, but when this fifth plague struck the livestock of the Egyptians whilst leaving those of the Israelites untouched, God displayed His total control over creation. In stating the time for this plague and then making it happen He also demonstrates His control of time. Without warning, this plague was followed by the plague of boils, illustrating God's power over evil, striking down the magicians, leaving them unable to stand, and, despite the power they had demonstrated earlier, showing them as unable to overcome this plague.

Through these two plagues, God again demonstrated His power over false gods of the Egyptians (animals and health), whilst protecting those who followed Him. The magicians struck down by boils may not have known who God was, but Moses told Pharaoh that God was 'the LORD, the God of the Hebrews' (v.1) both almighty and personal. Though the Israelites were Pharaoh's slaves, they belonged to God who desired their freedom.

'Not again' God must have thought when, despite having seen and heard who God was, Pharaoh still refused to let God's people go; but God still gave him more chances. 'Not again' God must think when I forget that He has the power to work miracles. 'Not again' God must think when I live without recognising that He is the creator and ruler of the universe, and that time is in His hands. 'Not again' God must think when my heart is captured by things that start to squeeze God out of my life, and I live as if He is not the LORD and as if I don't belong to Him. However, Lent is a time of penitence, an opportunity for us to re-evaluate ourselves and our relationship with Him, knowing He is patient and that, when we call out to Him and repent, He will set us free to worship Him.

**Let us pray:** *Father God. Help me to remember who you are, Almighty God, LORD, Creator of the universe and Lord of time. Help me to let You rule over my life and not allow false gods to squeeze You out and take Your place. Amen.*

**Stephanie Rankin, Stewardship Resourcing Officer**