



*'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.'*¹

God sometimes uses signs to demonstrate his glory in creation and to guide his people. He strengthens our faith in him and gives confidence in the purpose to which he has called us.² Jesus spoke of signs that would indicate his return and reflect the end of time.³ I have often asked God for signs to confirm that a particular decision or course of action I took was the right one and have certainly prayed for God to give a 'supernatural' or tangible sign to my unbelieving friends to zap them into believing the reality of God's existence. On many occasions those prayers were answered and my faith strengthened, but on some I didn't get the answer to prayer that I wanted or expected.

The generation that Jesus was confronted with also asked for signs, but he rebuked them because they already had the sign of Jonah and Word of God to believe in.⁴ Moses asked for signs for people to know he was sent by God, and God enabled him to display many.⁵ Some believed, but many others, especially Pharaoh and the Egyptians, mocked the signs as they could replicate most of them. Are we any different today? No, you probably echo; asking for signs seems to happen in all manner of ways now. People want evidence - whether that is ticked boxes in the NHS, endless references,

or a miracle. We practise evidence-based medicine. When we are perhaps fortunate enough to get signs or evidence, they can be impressive, but never guarantee the desired response of belief in God or something else.

Of course that's not to say we shouldn't ask for signs or search for evidence, but what happened to a word being a bond? Recent scandals of politicians and some clergymen, to name but a few examples, have eroded our trust in leaders, each other and even in God. The stronghold of unbelief in turn has birthed scepticism, therefore 'mere' words or even good arguments only will just not do. Yet God is unchanging in his goodness and character and is faithful to keep his word.⁶ We can confidently stand on that solid rock, Christ the Word, and also aim to become like him in order to restore good character, integrity and trust in medical practice - to be salt and light in a world which can seem like a minefield, full of challenges.

This edition of *Nucleus* reminds us of the importance of virtues; how pressures in medicine can threaten our integrity. By exploring *Heroes and Heretics*, we are reminded of how we should really rely on God's grace in order to walk in obedience. There are also reports from the various student conferences that have taken place in the past few months and I really hope you enjoy reading through our new and brighter format to mark a new season celebrating forty years of *Nucleus*. ■