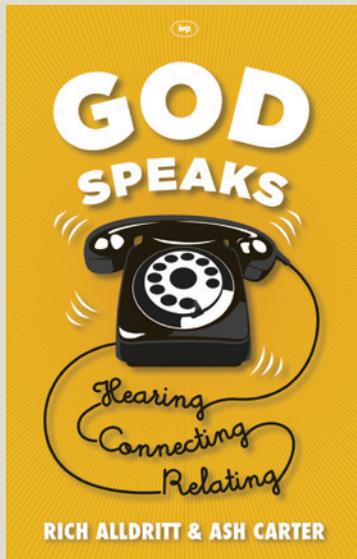


Putting together the jigsaw of revelation



Rich: The main headline is that God speaks through his Word, the Bible, by his Spirit, about his Son, Jesus. Each element is a massive subject in its own right, but the book is self-consciously an introduction. We don't pretend to say it all; we've just tried to hit the big points, one at a time, keeping things light and accessible.

Ash Carter and Rich Aldritt, both third-year students at Oak Hill, joined forces to write a book which makes the subject of revelation accessible for every Christian. We asked them about it

Ash: We wrote the book with every believer in mind. We think the issue of how God speaks is one of the key subjects for any Christian to get to grips with.

If we understand how God speaks, then we can truly know him and everything else slots into place. We can see Jesus clearly. We fall in love with him more deeply. We can make sense of the world in which we live.

Get that wrong and we lose all of those things. We lose God. We lose life. For that reason, we hope *God Speaks* is simple enough for any believer to read. We wanted it to be fun too. We hope people will enjoy reading it as much as we enjoyed writing it.

Ash: We're certainly not the first to write a book about how God speaks to us. Far from it! Down through the centuries, stacks of important books have been written on the subject. Some of the greatest figures of church history have turned their minds to it, not to mention many more excellent recent contributions.

The honest truth is that there's not much new in *God Speaks*. If you are looking for novelty, look elsewhere. We're not reinventing the wheel – the wheel is already there. Please give us a hearing, though. Many of the best books are highly specific in focus, and simply not that accessible for many Christians.

Rich: *God Speaks* is a book we've both been looking for, for quite a while now. Again and again we've wanted to give it to friends. Since we couldn't find it, we thought it best to write it. It seemed like a useful way to spend the long Oak Hill summer holiday.

Ash: In many ways *God Speaks* is unique. There are lots of books on the market that address individual aspects of the subject – for example, books about scripture or about the Holy Spirit – but nothing that covers the whole sweep of the subject from beginning to end.

Rich: The book took shape over the last couple of years as we sat under Mike Ovey's doctrine lectures. One of the big lessons we've learned at Oak Hill is that all doctrine is joined up. Theology is like a road map – everything is connected. It's almost impossible to consider a discrete area of Christian doctrine in isolation, because each area is involved in the discussion of the others.

For that reason, the book begins in what some might consider a surprising place. We start with the doctrine of creation and the creator/creature distinction, together with the doctrine of humanity as a result of the fall (both critical elements of Mike's systematic theology).

What we've discovered is that pretty much every theological issue is dependent on the doctrine of God. You're unlikely to hold to a

biblical understanding of how God speaks without first getting a right understanding of who God is and (by implication) who we are.

The rest of the book continues in the same vein as we've tried to join the dots. Our aim was to cover the whole sweep of the subject, and put all of the pieces of the jigsaw in their proper place.

Rich: We'd love the book to help many Christians get to grips with this key topic. Our prayer is that God will use our efforts to point people in the right direction when it comes to their relationship with God. We also hope it will keep one or two from drifting off in the wrong direction. Along the way we've tried to address some of the main errors into which people fall. If we can help our readers maintain their confidence in the God who speaks then we'll be delighted. We'd love for whole churches to be committed to listening to the scriptures, seeking to know Jesus as he is revealed there.

Ash: That said, there is one overarching aim of *God Speaks* that we've not yet mentioned. It's something we consider to be the key distinctive of the book. We wanted the book to be about Jesus. That might sound obvious. But actually you'd be surprised how easily it gets missed.

Many conservative evangelical Christians talk a lot about the Bible, but very little about Jesus. The same is true of lots of our churches. We

position ourselves as 'Bible teaching churches', we emphasise word ministry, but sometimes we don't make that much of Jesus. That's also reflected in the Christian book market: there are lots of books on the doctrine of revelation that are all about the Bible, but not many about Jesus as the one who makes God known. We wanted to correct that imbalance.

God Speaks is unashamedly about Jesus. He is the centrepiece of the jigsaw: the one who reveals the Father; the one to whom the Bible points; the one whom the Spirit illuminates. The Bible is not an end in itself. It is only useful because it testifies to the one we should be worshipping. We don't worship the book. We worship Jesus.

Our big prayer is that *God Speaks* will show Jesus off and, in turn, cause believers to fall in love with him more deeply.

SPECIAL OFFER

God Speaks retails at £8.99, but is available for only £5 to readers of *Commentary*. This offer includes a free copy of the eBook and free postage. Simply visit thinkivp.com, add *God Speaks* and the eBook of *God Speaks* to your shopping basket and enter the code *GSOffer2013* to activate this special offer. Valid until 31 August 2013.