

SCARBOROUGH BULLETIN

What is happening at Scarborough Baptist Church?

THIS WEEK

HUMILITY

The name of God



Welcome to another Zoom simulcast of our service. It seems that the time of isolation may be coming to an end, and that we could perhaps return to some form of "normal" in the near future. While we have been greatly blessed by having the digital technology to stay in touch with each other and to worship together, most people still feel the lack of personal face to face fellowship deeply.

The letters in the new Testament were also indirect forms of fellowship. The physical absence of Paul from some local churches, forcing him to write letters to them, however, has proved to be a great blessing to generations of future Christians. Through his letters, we have all gained insights into the character and will of God. If Paul was presenting face to face sermons week after week, we may have missed some of his mature thoughts. Paul still hoped to meet people face to face. Letters are not the same as being physically present with people. God, however, used Paul's absence for the best. While Zoom is not ideal, our God can make the most of it.

EVENTS THIS WEEK

Monday morning 10am Memorial service for Faye Day's son

Thursday evening Bible study at 7pm. The link for this is on the **calendar** on the website.

Teenzone is on Wednesday at 4.30pm.
Brighton Kids: as usual this week.

We are hoping to have both digital and physical services from 14 June, so people will have a choice as to whether they want to be at church or at home.

Offering: Please consider arranging an EFT as we have no other means of doing our offering at present. Our bank details: Scarborough Baptist Church - BSB 306-054 Account number 4186613

That God gave people his name, the Old Testament theologian Walther Eichrodt (Vol 1: 206) asserted, is the event by which "God himself came forth from his secret place and offered himself in fellowship." By introducing himself to people and giving them his name, God has stepped into the human world and declared himself willing to engage with people on a one to one, personal level. God shows, in the giving of his name, that he, in essence, is a personal being rather than an amorphous spiritual entity. The God who has a name, is the God whom the Old Testament could refer to, using all kinds of human attributes: God is described as having a face, hands, feet, emotions. For a long time theologians have dismissed these humanlike descriptions of God in the Old Testament as "non-real depictions of what God is like". "We all know that God cannot have hands or feet or eyes," these theologians say. "The Biblical writers just talk about God in this way so that we can understand something about him. We, however, know that God in essence is radically different from any such depictions; God is pure spirit, a being which is everywhere, all at once," they argue. "To think of him in such human terms



is to do him an injustice." The Old Testament writers, however, did not share any of these theological scruples about the character of God. There are no indications that they ever considered that they were projecting human traits onto God - because humans have hands, God also has to have a hand. For the Old Testament writers it worked the other way around: Humanity, they believed, was created in the "image of God". This means that people only have hands, because they reflect the creator God who has hands. Humans, similarly, have faces and emotions, because their God has a face and emotions. These theologians did not think that God was a human. God was seen as the Creator, eternal, radically different from humans. But the difference did not lie in God being impersonal while humans are personal. The God of the Old Testament, they insisted, was a personal God, a God who has a name. The name of God meant that he could be addressed. Israel understood that God was willing to meet people on a personal level; so much so, that He was willing to be affected by them in this relationship. God was an "I", someone with a name, a living person and not a thing.

While God has a name, Israel also understood that his name was holy. By associating holiness with God's name, Israel confessed that her God was radically different from everyone or anything else. God's name could not to be taken lightly or in vain. And yet, God could be addressed, could be spoken to, pleaded with and worshipped because He has a name. "Our Father in heaven, may your name be treated as holy."