

## Spanish Wells Conference. June 2000. "I stood between the Lord and you", Deut 5.5 (fifth book!)

Context = "at that time". Refer back events recorded in Exod 19-20, when Israel 1<sup>st</sup> came Mt Sinai; events repeated for benefit next generation later in our chapter (vv.22-27). Briefly, people afraid; not that blame them - confronted by thunder + lightning, thick cloud, blackness and thick darkness, a tempest + the mountain quaking, a devouring fire + smoke as furnace, voice as trumpet exceeding loud, and getting progressively louder. On top of it all, God spoke with "great voice", 22. Quite understandably, the people shrank back in terror at the sight of God's glory and the sound of God's voice. "And when the people saw, they removed (trembled), and stood afar off", Exod.20.18. They proposed to Moses that he alone should draw near to God. Our chapter fills in some of details, Deut 5.23-24b,25,27. I like it; "Why should we die? ... You go near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say". And he did. "The people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was", Exod.20.21. Remember that this was the man who some 40 years before on the very same mountain had hid face because been "afraid to look upon God", Exod.3.6; Stephen's commentary = "as he drew near to behold (take note, look - at the flame of fire in the bush), the voice of the Lord came to him. Then Moses trembled, and dared not behold", Acts 7.32. Then question of what hear and see. Again today he very much shared the people's fears. Writer to Hebrews of this very occasion, "So fearful (terrible) was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake ('tremble', as bush 40 years before, Acts 7.32)", Heb.12.21. he trembled as they and yet he went. "I stood between the Lord and you".

In sense, story of life. If the Lord not been Moses' undertaker, made good epitaph in valley in land of Moab; Deut.34.6. For often stood between to shelter from wrath. One notable example found in Exod.32.7-14; 31-32. No greater tribute could be paid to the power of Moses' prayer than that, before ever Moses pleaded with God for people, God first pleaded with Moses against them; "let me alone (ie "allow me to rest"; relate Noah) ... that I may consume them", 10. Untie my hands. The Lord knew well the holy violence with which with His servant's requests would assail Him! And He was so right. For, following Moses' impassioned appeal (i) to God's redeeming act, v11 (Don't tell me my people; Thy, brought forth Egypt needed great power and mighty hand),(ii) to God's great name, v12 (Egyptians for mischief out to slay), reputation to consider, and (iii) to God's solemn oath, v13 (remember A,I and J, to whom sworn by own self, because none greater, two immutable things confirm, reinforce promise, Heb.6.13. Checkmate), "the Lord repented of the evil (sense of disaster, judgement, calamity) which he thought to do unto his people", 14. Yet Moses knew that still not over; temporary reprieve. Interesting that, when, at end of wilderness, repeat story to Israel in Deut. 9. 18-19, add few details about time returned to Lord; "I fell down before the Lord, as at the first, forty days and forty nights (ie been 40 days [vv 9,11] of revelation - receive instructions tabernacle etc before descend to calf - now 40 days of intercession; God spoke to him; he to God): I neither ate bread, nor drank water, (as first 40, v9) because of all your sins which you committed in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, to make him angry. For I was afraid (LXX = "exceedingly fear" and quake, Heb.12.21, when law given) because of the anger and the fury, with which the Lord was angry against you, to **destroy** you. But the Lord listened to me at that time also", Deut.9.18-19. Could truly say, "I stood between the Lord and you".

Psa.106 = sandwich psalm; begin/end, "Praise ye the Lord"; v23 provides an inspired commentary on these events; "Forgot God their Saviour, who done great things in Egypt, and terrible things by Red Sea. Therefore he said that he would **destroy** them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should **destroy** them". "Breach" refer to a gap in wall. Military metaphor. Picture of invader broken through/made a breach in city wall; to prevent enemy rush/pour through, some courageous defender step into breach and repel. Almost 900 years later, days of Nebuchadnezzar and exile, through the prophet Ezekiel God explained, "I sought for a man among them (His people) that should ... stand in the gap(breach) before me for the land, that I should not **destroy** it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out my indignation upon them", Ezek.22.30,31. Alas for them, there was no Moses! Truly, Moses was an amazing man. In spite of his very real fear, he stood between Lord and Israel, to avert anger/wrath of Lord. How much he loved this people and how much they owed to him!

Tomorrow morning, will meet to remember One far greater than Moses. One "counted worthy of so much more glory than Moses", Heb.3.3. NT describe Moses as "mediator, middleman, intermediary" : "the law was ordained (administered) ... by the hand of a mediator", Gal.3.19. "By hand of" = very language of LXX Num 4.37,45, "the commandment of the Lord by the hand of M". But One to remember = mediator of a better/the new covenant, Heb 8.6 (B); 9.15 (N); 12.24(N).

The Saviour able say, "I stood between Lord and you" with depth of meaning go far beyond Moses.

Once stood between disciples and foes in garden, "Jesus, knowing (13.1, hour come, frontier, having loved; 19.28 all accomplished, scripture fulfilled, thirst) all things that come on him, went forth and said, Who seek? 'Jesus of Nazareth'. I am he. 'Went backward and fell ground. Ask again who. 'Jesus of Nazareth'. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am *he*: if therefore you seek me, let these go their way, that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spoke, Of them whom you gave me I have lost none", John 18.4-9. Then Shepherd stood, position between wolves and sheep. But then He is the good Shepherd, and not the hireling who sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, John 10.12. But here "I stood between Lord and you". Direct to the cross. "There is one God, and one 'mediator' between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all", 1 Tim.2.5-6. Moses was mediator between God and Israel; Christ Jesus = God and men. "Gave self". Who fail be moved because "my body given", He gave His back to smiters (LXX = to scourges, murderous and horrendous weapon and instrument torture, leather strips, imbedded acorn lead and sharp bones, mass bleeding flesh, torn all directions), cheeks to pluck hair, (hid not) face to spittle, head to thorns, hands and feet to nails, side to spear/lance. All so true - but "gave self ransom" . Question of

payment to set free sins. Because not only suffer from men but for men. I hear Him say, "I stood between the Lord and you".

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all", Isa. 53.6. I hear Him say, I STOOD BETWEEN THE LORD AND YOU.. The judgement fell not me but on my substitute. Laid on = made iniquity of us all to meet on, mgn; include idea launch hostile attack. OT = often "fell upon", describe some violent assault. (Doeg, Ahimelech, priests of Nob, 1 Sam 22.18.) I.e. caused iniquities of us all to rush on Him as savage horde. I hear Him say, I STOOD BETWEEN THE LORD AND YOU.

And what great cost involved Jesus when stood between Lord and me. Think terms : (i) Sword of lord of hosts awakened against My Shepherd (not only theirs, John 18)/man fellow, equal (awake), Zech.13.7. He intercepted falling sword of justice cut me to pieces. (ii) Cup filled to brim, from Father's hand, John 18.11 (Peter not want lord shelter, v8, affirm willing prison and death. Put "sword" into sheath(cf (i), cup Father given). Was the cup my sins had helped fill; was my cup; all hell distilled into cup. (iii) God forsook Him. Infinite mystery. Been forsaken by disciples (Gethsemane; all forsook and fled) and nation (Gabbatha; disowned; no king); now God (Golgotha). Ugly word; to abandon, desert someone in trouble, to leave in the lurch. One who said, "If I judge, my judgement is true; for I am not alone, but I and the father that sent me", John 8.16; "He that sent me is with me: the Father has not left me alone; because I do always those things which please Him", 8.29; "Behold, the hour is coming, yea, is now come, that you will be scattered, every one to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me", 16.32. Not alone. Cf "went both of them together", Gen 22.6,8. Yet that only until came to "place" of the altar; interesting vicinity of cross, 2 Chron 3.1. Abraham not on altar, only figuratively. "I watch, and am a sparrow alone upon the housetop", Psa 102.7 (end = Heb 1 of Christ, "Thou Lord in beginning). "Alone" in that dreadful hour - in a place where His foot had never trod before, where His foot would never tread again. It was the cry of One who fathomed deepest abyss/pit of sorrow and suffering. I hear Him say, I STOOD BETWEEN THE LORD AND YOU..

Small wonder that beforehand spoke about soul troubled/exceeding sorrowful, John 12 (now ... save)/Mark 14 (exceeding, encompassed). "None ransomed ever knew". Abigail once stood between David (400 + swords; very great, shearing, 3000 sheep, 1000 goats in Carmel, 10 young men, who is David, son of Jesse?) and Nabal to avert David's anger; "Fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, *upon me let this iniquity be*", 1 Sam 25.24. When Saviour stood between Lord and me, He said it. Mine were the transgressions, but His were the wounds (Isa.53.5); mine were the iniquities, but His the bruises (crushing); mine were the sins, but His the suffering (1 Pet.3.18); mine was the disobedience, but His the curse (Gal.3.10,13). He stood between the Lord and me.

How greatly Moses must have loved the people that He prepared to stand between the Lord and them. How much more must Jesus have loved His own that He should be prepared to stand between the Lord and them.

I wonder if heard name, Tony Bullimore. TB was the British yachtsman who, over 3 years ago capsized 2,500 kilometres from south west coast of Australia in the icy vastness of the Southern ocean. Then been at sea for two months, competing in Vendee Globe round-the-world race. Was sheltered in tiny air pocket in upturned hull for best part of 5 days. Canberra marine rescue officers received distress signal which triggered rescue mission. Australian defence forces were involved long-distance air and sea operation. No one had ever been rescued so deep within the Southern ocean but, in spite of appalling weather conditions, rescue services continued search. Rescued by Warship HMAS Adelaide on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> January 1997. Later wrote book, titled appropriately "Saved". In it tells how the following Monday arrived safely Fremantle, by Perth. 10,000 people lined dockside. 150 journalists. Hobble to podium.

One journalist questioned the huge bill for the rescue, which fell upon Australian taxpayers. Warship HMAS Adelaide alone used 600,000 litres of fuel. Then there had been the risks to the rescue forces; RAAF pilots had skimmed giant waves in winds that rarely dropped below 45 knots.

"There *is* something a little absurd about the tremendous cost of rescuing people who attempt difficult challenges", Bullimore admitted. "I have thought about it very deeply and I don't know whether we have *the right* to lean on society, communities or countries to say, 'Well, here we are, come and rescue us' ... Let me say one thing. Thank you Australia for giving back my life. Thank you very much". No, there was no way he could begin to justify the enormous cost, but he was extremely grateful that it had been paid.

I am in much the same position. I had no right to look up to heaven and say to the Son of God, 'Well, here I am, come and rescue me - come and stand between the Lord and me'. Did Lot have the right to say that to Abraham when dragged away captive (took and departed; after pitch tent towards and dwell) by Chedorlaomer and his confederates?, Gen 14.12. Or Jehoshaphat (affinity Ahab, Ramoth Gilead) to God when surrounded by the chariots of Syria?, 2 Chron.18.31. No, but Abraham raced to save Lot and God moved the captains of the chariots to leave Jehoshaphat alone. I say again, I had absolutely no right to look up to heaven and say to the Son of God, 'Well, here I am, come and rescue me'. But, He did it - without even being asked! "He saw me plunged in deep distress ... ". And I too have been "Saved"!

But at what a cost; what a staggering cost. Can I justify the expense? No, a thousand times no. It is out of all proportion. The scourge, thorns, nails, cup, the darkness, forsaking/desolation. All I know is that I am grateful - and will continue to be thankful through endless ages - that *for me* the expense was met, the cost was paid - that He stood between the Lord and me.