

## Where Holiness Dwells

Ga'al (Redeemer)

*You will lead the people You have redeemed with Your faithful love; You will guide [them] to Your holy dwelling with Your strength. - Exodus 15:13 HCSB*

A woman's husband returned home from the war with post-traumatic stress syndrome. She was unable to deal with him or get him to care for himself and was soon ready to leave him. But first, she sought the help of a wise man who told her he could make a potion to heal her husband, but the remedy required the chest hair of a bear.

The woman spent months befriending a bear at its cave, getting closer and closer to it until one day she was close enough to pull the hair and run for safety. She then brought the hair to the wise man who simply threw it away. The woman screamed "I risked my life for that hair! You were to make a potion to heal my husband!"

The wise man smiled and said, "Now go home and be as patient with your husband as you were with the bear."

The Jewish people were expecting God to take them to a place "where holiness dwells." But when they got to Canaan, they found giants and walled fortress cities. They balked and ended up wandering the wilderness for forty years. Forty years later, they still had to face the same giants and walled cities but this time they were prepared to fight for it.

One of God's names is Ga'al, or Redeemer. He has ransomed us from the clutch of Satan through the finished work of Christ. But that does not mean holiness (or what some refer to as sanctification) comes easy. There is still an effort on our part. Listen to the apostle Paul – *"We put no confidence in human effort. Instead, we boast about what Christ Jesus has done for us...I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection! But I KEEP WORKING toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ Jesus saved me for and wants me to be. No, dear brothers and sisters, I am still not all I should be, but I am FOCUSING ALL MY ENERGIES on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I STRAIN TO REACH the end of the race and receive the prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us up to heaven."*<sup>1</sup>

Holiness cannot be found in a potion, nor in a location (like church or in nature). Holiness is a path. It is the effort to demonstrate our gratitude to Christ for our redemption by obeying Him and serving Him. But just like Israel, we cannot fight in our human strength alone – we need the Redeemer, Ga'al, to call us, set us on the path and give us the requisite strength. In the end, it's all still His doing.

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<sup>1</sup> Philippians 3:3b, 12-14