

# THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

Lesson 1



# KEY TEXT

***“ ‘Then hear in heaven  
Your dwelling place their  
prayer and their  
supplication, and  
maintain their cause’ ”***

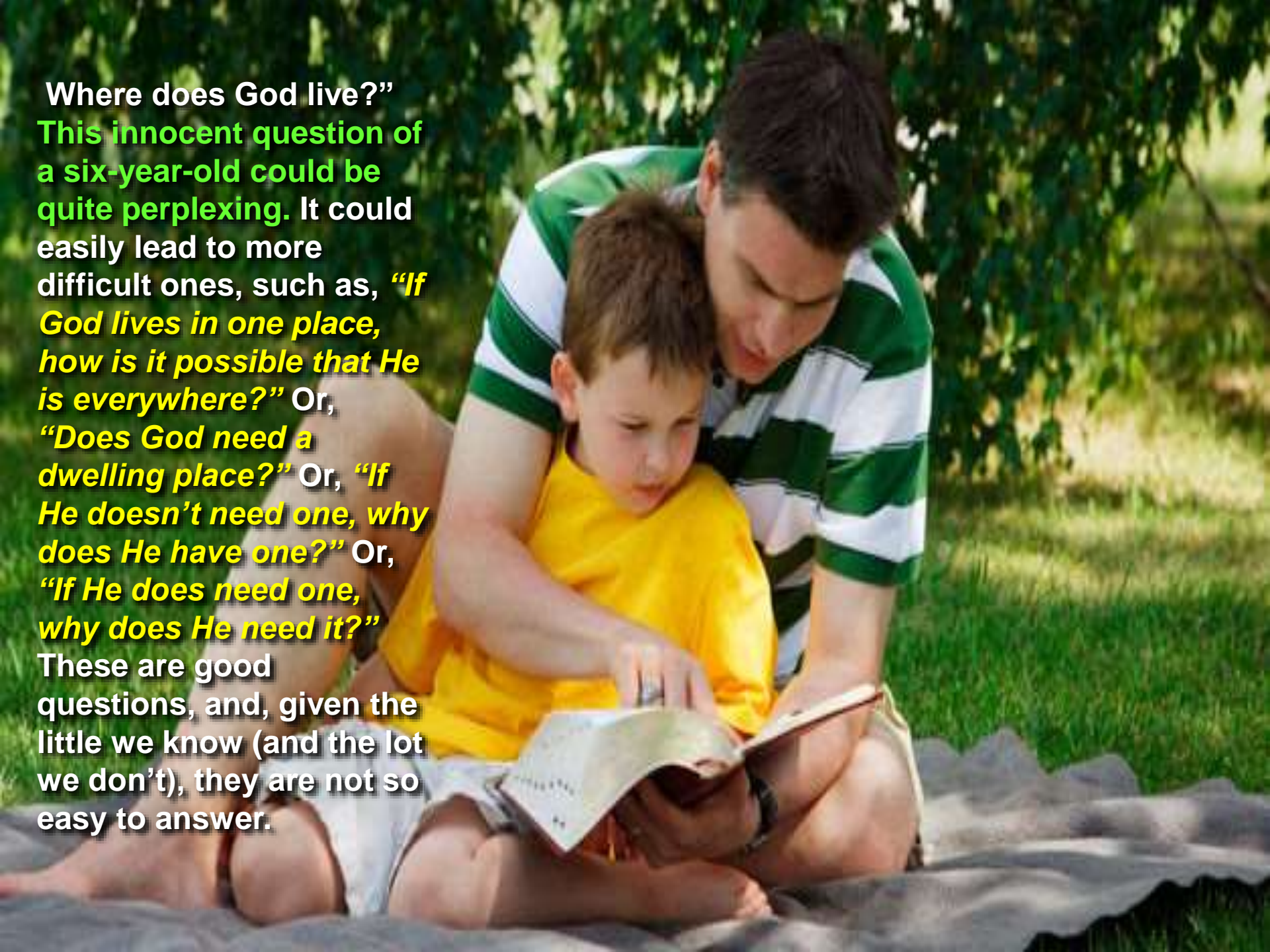
***1 Kings 8:49***



Where does God live?"

This innocent question of a six-year-old could be quite perplexing. It could easily lead to more difficult ones, such as, *"If God lives in one place, how is it possible that He is everywhere?"* Or, *"Does God need a dwelling place?"* Or, *"If He doesn't need one, why does He have one?"* Or, *"If He does need one, why does He need it?"*

These are good questions, and, given the little we know (and the lot we don't), they are not so easy to answer.



# WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?



**"You have hedged me behind and before,  
and laid Your hand upon me...  
Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?  
If I ascend into heaven, You are there;  
if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning,  
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,  
even there Your hand shall lead me,  
and Your right hand shall hold me"**

Psalm 139:5-10

**God is able to be everywhere at the same time. That is known as Omnipresence.**

**He can be anywhere, but He decided to choose a specific place to meet with the angels and with the non-fallen worlds... and with us when we'll be finally with Him.**



# WHERE DOES GOD LIVE?

“And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, **forgive**”  
(1 Kings 8:30)

“For He looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven the Lord viewed the earth”  
(Psalm 102:19)

God dwells in His Sanctuary in Heaven; “the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Heb. 8:2). The earthly sanctuary was “the copy and shadow” of that sanctuary (Heb. 8:5)

What does God do at the heavenly Sanctuary?

1. He governs, His throne is there.
2. He receives all worship.
3. He passes judgment.
4. He ministers for our salvation.



# REFLEXION

**How can we better manifest goodness, righteousness, and justice in a world filled with evil, unrighteousness, and injustice?  
*Why must we do these things?***



# THE PLACE WHERE GOD GOVERNS

**"The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all"**  
(Psalm 103:19)

God is sitting on His throne. He reigns over all His Creation because there is nothing above Him.

Which are the main principles of His government?

**"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; mercy and truth go before Your face"**  
(Psalm 89:14)

The character of God is shown in His government.  
He wants His people to show the same character.

**"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?"**  
(Micah 6:8)



# THE PLACE WHERE GOD IS WORSHIPPED

John saw the Throne of God in Revelation 4 and 5—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit were there. It was surrounded by the four living creatures, 24 elders and millions of angels.



A sea of glass was before the throne. That's where God meets His creatures when they come to Him (Rev. 15:2)

God receives worship from every creating being there.

"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!" Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever"  
(Revelation 5:13-14)



**“The church of God below is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth and the beings in heaven who have never fallen constitute one church. Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints who on earth meet to worship God. In the inner court of heaven they listen to the testimony of the witnesses for Christ in the outer court on earth, and the praise and thanksgiving from the worshipers below is taken up in the heavenly anthem, and praise and rejoicing sound through the heavenly courts because Christ has not died in vain for the fallen sons of Adam. While angels drink from the fountainhead, the saints on earth drink of the pure streams flowing from the throne, the streams that make glad the city of our God. Oh, that we could all realize the nearness of heaven to earth! When the earthborn children know it not, they have angels of light as their companions. A silent witness guards every soul that lives, seeking to draw that soul to Christ. As long as there is hope, until men resist the Holy Spirit to their eternal ruin, they are guarded by heavenly intelligences. Let us all bear in mind that in every assembly of the saints below are angels of God, listening to the testimonies, songs, and prayers. Let us remember that our praises are supplemented by the choirs of the angelic host above”**

# REFLEXION

**Think about what it means that Christ, as God Himself, took on our humanity and died as our Substitute; that is, whatever wrongs you have done for which you yourself should be punished fell on Him instead.**

**Why should this truth motivate everything that you do?**



# THE PLACE WHERE GOD PASSES JUDGMENT

**“But the Lord shall endure forever; He has prepared His throne for judgment”** (Psalm 9:7)



Since sin entered the world, the heavenly Sanctuary is also the judgment court now. Saints and sinners are judged there.

God’s government is based upon justice and mercy, so we can be confident of His right judgment. His sentence is unappealable.

**“But the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him”**  
(Habakkuk 2:20)





## THE PLACE WHERE GOD SAVES

“Therefore He [Jesus] is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them” (Hebrews 7:25)

Where does Jesus intercede on our behalf?  
Where does He get eternal salvation for us?

“Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man” (Hebrews 8:1-2)

**“Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and he is there to make an atonement for the people. He is there to present his wounded side and pierced hands to his Father. He is there to plead for his Church that is upon the earth. He is cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people”**

E.G.W. (The Review and Herald, January 28 1890)

# A GLIMPSE OF THE HEAVENLY SANCTUARY

Sanctuary imagery appears all along the Revelation book. In fact, most of the major sections of the book begin with or contain a sanctuary scene.



The first introductory scene shows Christ, clothed as High Priest, walking among the seven lampstands (Rev. 1:12-20)



The second shows the heavenly throne room; there is a throne, lamps, a sea, a slain Lamb, blood, and golden bowls of incense (Rev. 4, 5)



The third scene refers to the continual service of intercession in the context of the first apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 8:2-6)



The fourth and central scene gives us a glimpse of the ark of the covenant in the second apartment (Rev. 11:19)



The fifth scene brings the entire tabernacle in heaven into view (Rev. 15:5-8)



The sixth scene is unique in that it does not contain any explicit references to the sanctuary, perhaps to illustrate that Christ's work there is finished (Rev. 19:1-10)

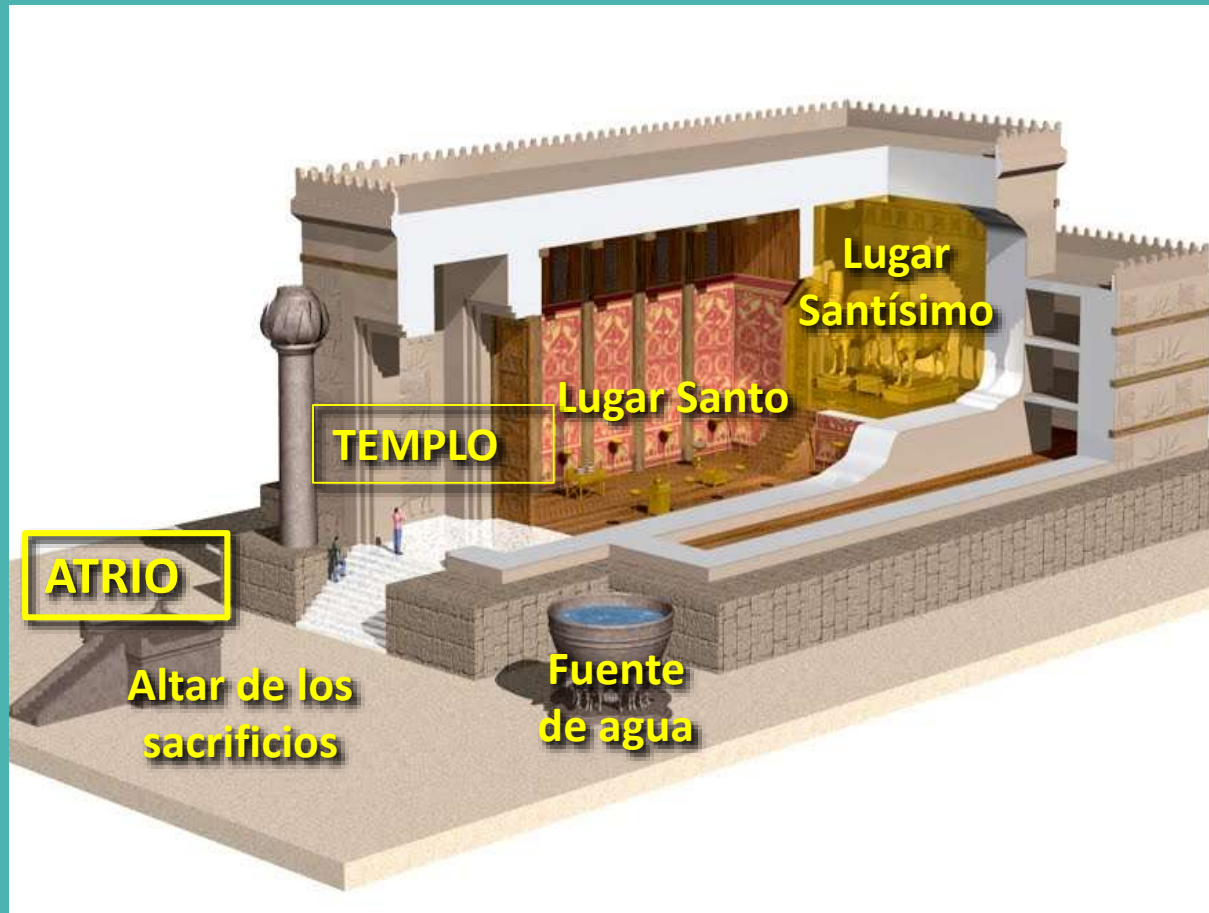


The final scene is all about the glorious Holy City on earth, which is portrayed as the tabernacle "coming down out of heaven" (Rev. 21:1-8, NASB)

Those verses show a progression in salvation: from Christ on earth, to His heavenly ministry and finally to the new earth tabernacle.

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