

44-01-07.wpd --Our Deposit in the Bank of Heaven
Ascension, Incarnation, humanity, Christ's Reign, prayer
Acts 1:9-12

By faith in Jesus Christ we have the authority of Heaven on Earth.

INTRODUCTION: (Text as the Scripture Reading)

--Ill.: Suppose an investor put \$1,000,000 into a bank account and registered you with authority to write checks from it to carry on business for him, until he returned from overseas. How would you handle that obligation?

1. Would you make sure you knew the investor's background and business plans?
2. Would you stay in touch with him and seek his guidance about transactions?
3. Would you be afraid that the checks you wrote from that account might bounce?
4. Would you think the investor would forget about the account and not come back?

-- I want to talk about ***our deposit in the bank of Heaven*** (title). *Jesus* is the *Investor*, and He Himself is the deposit. Under His *authority*, we are to *draw upon His resources* in Heaven for *His ongoing business on Earth*. His *business plan* is to *rule the world*, and His *Holy Spirit will guide us* in how to invest His resources here, until He gets back. Until that day, **HOM.idea**.

I. What Makes Our Earthly Deposit in Heaven Valid?

- A. Jesus can do business on Earth from Heaven, because He is a true citizen of Earth-- John 1:14, The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (God invested His Son in the human business of this world, and through Him we have access to an overflowing abundance of God's "grace and truth.")
- B. God made our deposit in Heaven with acceptable currency: At His **ascension**, Jesus returned to Heaven with a *resurrected body*. His eternal humanity is now Earth's currency in Heaven for God's will and work in our lives. (Jesus Himself was the answer to the prayer He taught us to pray, in Mat 6:10 (NASB), "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.")
- C. Why should Christians celebrate the Ascension? Because it's the anniversary date of God's acceptance of His Son's payment for our sins and for redeeming creation.

TRANS: Christ's Deposit of Himself in the bank of Heaven is our contact point with Heaven's resources. *By faith in Jesus Christ we have*

the authority of Heaven on Earth to do the business of God's Kingdom.

II. What Hinders Us , Then, from Drawing Upon This Account?

- A. Perhaps we're having some "cloudy thinking"-- **v.9**, *After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.*
 1. With the Investor now physically absent, we are left holding the checkbook, much like the 3 servants in Jesus' parable--Mat 25:14-15 (NKJV), For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey.
 2. One servant had "cloudy thinking" and failed to get busy with those funds, but the other two had a clear picture of their duty to invest the resources committed to their responsibility. (Let's be like the two faithful servants, and invest Christ in our world!)
- B. Perhaps we fail to draw upon our Deposit in Heaven, because we are still looking for God's direct divine intervention-- **v.10a**, They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going... [When William Carey wanted to go to the foreign mission field, someone tried to hinder him by saying that God didn't need Carey's help, but could convert the heathen by Himself in His own good time and by His own good pleasure.] God's good pleasure is that we connect with Christ's authority in Heaven for the work and expansion of His Kingdom on Earth.
- C. Perhaps we need some messengers ["angels"] to exhort us to get to work-- **v.10b-11a**, ... suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky?..."

TRANS: God wants us to be ready for Christ's 2nd Coming, but how we prepare for His return is not by staring at the sky. We are to be busy as His servants blessing our world, our environment, our neighbors and neighborhood, by investing Christ's power on Earth as it is in Heaven. **By faith in Jesus Christ we have the authority of Heaven on Earth.**

III. What is the Divine Investment Plan?

- A. In **v.11b-12** the disciples acted on the message the angels had for them: "*This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.*" Then they returned to *Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.* (They stopped *staring* and started *preparing* for Kingdom

work by going back to Jerusalem to pray and wait for Pentecost.)

- B. God's primary area of investment is people [*It's a Wonderful Life scene*: after the Depression hit, people were on a run to get their money out of the Building and Loan Association. George Bailey tried to get them to understand, by saying: "No ... you're thinking of this place all wrong. As if I had the money back in a safe. The money's not here. Your money's in Joe's house...right next to yours. And in the Kennedy house, and Mrs. Macklin's house, and a hundred others."] (Sometimes focusing on our own wants and needs alone makes us forget what Jesus said about our purpose on Earth to invest Christ in the lives of others -- Mat 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.)
- C. God's investment in humanity is also an investment in creation ["the world" Jesus calls us to be light of is literally the *cosmos*, "the created order," the universe]-- John 3:16, For God so loved the world [the *cosmos*] that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (God's perfect will for the *cosmos* began in the Garden of Eden, but it was never fulfilled, and it won't be fulfilled until Jesus comes back to fill a new heaven and a new earth with a resurrected humanity)

CONCLUSION:

--In the meantime, until the ascended Christ descends again... "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven" is not just a prayer to pray. It's an investment to make in people's lives and in this piece of cosmic dust called planet Earth, over which God gave us stewardship. **By faith in Jesus Christ we have the authority of Heaven on Earth.** Let us stand in His authority and bless people and this *cosmos* with the *light* and *power* of His salvation in Christ.

Acts 1:9-12 (NIV) After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. {10} They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. {11} "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven." {12} Then they returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city.