

## **OUR ASCENDED CHRIST IS OUR SOON COMING KING**

Text: 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” (Acts 1:11b, NIV)

Reading: **Acts 1: 6-14**

Hymn: **Hail the day that sees him rise, Alleluia! – StF 300**

As Methodists, we celebrate two important events today: The ascension of Jesus Christ and Aldersgate day, which marks the heart-warming experience of John and Charles Wesley.

When the disciples met with Jesus on the mount of ascension, they asked him: “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” Jesus’ answer might have disappointed them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. While the disciples were gearing towards an earthly kingdom where they will be government functionaries, Jesus was preparing them for spiritual empowerment for witnessing. Predictably, they disappointingly looked into heaven when Jesus ascended. It is the angles’ assurance of Jesus’ return that might have comforted them.

First, the ascension of Jesus marked the end of his earthly ministry. From now on, Jesus was going to be with the father, preparing a place for us. Secondly, it marked the fulfilment of Jesus’ promise to die, rise again and go to his father. That means that we can trust Jesus to fulfil all his promises. Thirdly, it heralded the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, whom the disciples were to wait for. Finally, at the scene of the ascension, the angels confirmed that Jesus will come again. Since all the promises have been fulfilled, we can trust that Jesus will surely come again. We can turn the saying ‘What goes up, comes down’, around in Jesus’ case that ‘He who came down and went up, will come down again’.

Many who concern themselves with predicting when Jesus will return need to be reminded of Jesus’ reply to the disciples: ‘It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority’. John Wesley once preached at Spitalfields on ‘Prepare to meet thy God’. There was fear and panic about the world coming to an end or at least, London being swallowed up by an earthquake. Unlike many who were afraid and wandered about in the fields, John said: ‘I went to bed at my usual time and was fast asleep by ten o’clock’. Jesus’ message to the disciples, the angel’s assurance on the scene of the ascension and John Wesley’s attitude, all invite us to be ready for the return of Jesus by living as though Jesus will come today and as though he will come in the next thousand years. Amen.