Sermon: **“Then the Son of Man will appear, coming in the clouds with great power and glory”** (Mark 13.26)

UK is struggling with Lockdown; will the usual Christmas be spoiled? Christmas with families, presents, glitter, food and celebration? Most people like the idea of a baby coming, & look forward with anticipation; this is part of Advent. But alongside that image is one of awe as something momentous and life-changing approaches. Too easily we get sucked into the former and forget the latter. Both *together* are the good news.

Since there will be plenty to remind us of the former, let us just now concentrate on the latter. TEXT –

very stark image, seized upon by some Christian groups, who pore over Revelation, looking for a timetable.

Behind all the hype is one important truth: there is a connection between earth and heaven, eg Jacob’s ladder in Genesis 28 and Paul’s vision in 2 Corinthians 12.2-4.

Sometimes humans are given a glimpse of heaven – eg Revelation 4.2-11. It is a movement of a human ‘up’.

But sometimes the movement is the other way round, and something of heaven comes ‘down’ and appears in our world. When this happens the language used is quite different. TEXT.

Eg another of today’s lectionary readings Isaiah 64.1: **Why don’t you tear the sky apart and come down?**

In NT, Mark 1.10: **he** [Jesus] **saw heaven opening** **& the Spirit coming down on him like a dove**

Later in Mark 15.38: **The curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two**

When heaven appears it is like a rupture, anticipated in Isaiah, fulfilled in Mark.

The message is clear – Jesus does not merely tells us about heaven, but his coming signals that God himself is breaking into our world.

So Jesus’ advent is not just the birth of a baby, but something much more momentous. Jesus is God!

As people of Jesus Christ we can both enjoy Christmas/Advent for the birth of a baby, family time, etc, but also note God breaking into our lives. Why not…?

[1] Remember when God broke into our lives in the past (both good and bad times)

[2] Reclaim Christmas from its over-commercialism (Black Friday, Cyber Monday, pre-Christmas sales)

[3] Reshape our lives, our church and our society into places where God is ever welcomed and honoured.