

Creation is falling apart.

Genesis is being reversed.

The lamps that God hung in the sky to light the earth –
the sun, moon, and stars –
are now sending out alarm signals.

The waters that once covered everything
and that God siphoned off into containers called seas
are rising to make a comeback.

God had raised up the earth in the midst of the seas,
giving people a place to stand secure.

But now the seas are seething & roaring,
threatening the order of creation with a return to primordial chaos.

This noise frightens people,
reminding them of Noah's time

and the flood that buried the earth and its inhabitants.

But what of the rainbow at the end of Noah's story?

What of the pledge that God would never again drown creation?

The rainbow is the Son of Man.

This One appears as things are falling apart,
arriving from a space that transcends collapse.

His advent banishes fear and allows his follows to stand up straight.

The Son of Man is the new earth,
the new place upon which to stand.

The waters cannot cover him.

He is the redemption that is offered in the midst of a perishing world.

At the start of Advent, Jesus tasks us with praying.

When our worlds fall apart...

and the prediction is that everyone's will...

the Son of Man is the name we give

to the fearless endeavor of rescue and redemption.

It is the name that belongs all people, who, following Jesus,
stay vigilant in prayer.

Far from shrinking from destruction, we lean into it.

We hold one another through and beyond the terrible collapses of life.

But what exactly is falling apart?

What are these terrible collapses?

For some it's the rise of authoritarianism...political anarchy...

corporate capitalism...the breakdown of the social order...the climate.

For some it's the body's vulnerability.

We have all seen this collapse in others, and,
despite a voracious appetite for self-deception,
we cannot convince ourselves that we will be spared.

For some it's the little world they've created.
You know, the life we made for ourselves....
The way we put things together,
the plans we have and are eagerly implementing.

Then our children move away.
Our job is downsized.
Our real estate taxes are raised beyond our means.
Our spouse turns moody & silent...
the world we inhabited and hoped would continue is in shambles.
The house has fallen.

These collapses can be complete or partial.
Regardless of what is collapsing in your world,
one thing is certain –
in human life
breakdown is inevitable.

In the most threatening moments of our lives,
the Son of Man appears as a protecting nearness
that does not permit final destruction.

Jesus, the Son of Man, coming on the clouds with power and glory
is a magnificent imaginative picture of this possibility
that God graciously offers.
It has all the flavor and excitement of last-minute rescue.

It reminds me of another picture,
more realistic,
but no less dramatic.
It is the earthly Son of Man
swallowing the entire world of collapse with his voice.
“Then Jesus gave a loud cry
and breathed his last”. Mark 15:37