

## 20210822 Reflection

### Revelation 21:5-7 Evergreen life

When I came to New Zealand more than twenty years ago, my first impression was that New Zealand was a green country. Anywhere I went, it looked green even in winter. Still, we have four seasons, and we experience changes accordingly. But the changes do not affect the overall green-ness. Being green all the time is a metaphor for eternal life. We find the theme – 'evergreen life' through the two readings. One is from the Book of Revelation 21:5-7, and the other, *The Cherry Tree*. The message of Revelation is simple but strong. At the beginning of chapter 21, we are informed that God restores the whole creation as intended. Now there is a new heaven and a new earth as the first earth passed away. John also sees that the new Jerusalem is coming down out of heaven from God as a bride adorned for her husband as if they have been prepared beforehand. But believers don't see such new life until time comes. The role of the seer, therefore, helps us see this new reality – the evergreen life.

In *the Cherry Tree*, we see the same 'evergreen life.' After World War 2, Japanese people had to live from day to day. The book captures a snippet of life through the eyes of a boy, namely Taichi. In the story, everything looks grey and grim. His father is gone to war and never comes back. His daily life is lonely with no hope. But when he meets an old man wrapping an old cherry tree with straws, he is able to see hope in that the cherry tree might blossom again. The winter is harsh for anyone including Taichi. Yet when spring comes, miraculously the cherry tree blossoms once again. But it's not only about the tree. It is also about the lives of Taichi and others who have lost hope but now regain it. Their lives can blossom again. Indeed, the cherry tree blossoms every year, we may say that it has the evergreen life, so do people of hope!

In Romans 8:24, Pauls says, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience." Revelation tells us to have hope that we don't see now, but that we can see in Christ. Taichi can see the Cherry Tree blossoming again through the eyes of hope. We, too, hope to see us as church blossom again in Christ. May God help us continue this life in Christ. Amen.