

Rule on Earth

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I can find a bad fellow who plots to conquer the world in almost all hero cartoons and dramas. He has the endless desire to dominate, and tries to take over the world so that he can rule it as he likes. I feel the word “rule” carrying a connotation of controlling people. It happens not only in stories of world conquest but also in our daily lives. To rule also means to try to force our views on others and have our own ways, even if it is unconscious.

So I wonder why the word “rule” is used in Revelation 5:10.

You have made them a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and they shall rule on earth.
(Revelation 5:10 TEV)

Instead of “rule,” Revised Standard Version uses the word “reign,” which I think is a better word.

Pondering on the scripture, however, I feel a message coming to my mind: “Be a priest and rule on earth.” For a long time, I have thought that this verse refers to the people specially chosen by God among Christians. In the times of the Old Testament, not everyone could be a priest, but only those who were chosen as the representatives of the people. Yet, a thought suddenly arises in me: “If I were a priest and ruled the world, what would I do?” Then a picture of me singing the *heavenly praises* comes before my eyes. I am convinced that priests are those who worship in spirit and truth, and that to rule on earth is to fill the earth with the *heavenly praises*.

The more the *heavenly praises* fill the earth, the less *stoikia* (elemental spirits) and Satan can work on earth. It means that we will rule on earth by the *heavenly praises*. It is not to dominate others but to put the power of darkness and Satan under our rule. This image would not have been given to me if I had read the verse with the word “reign.”

I believe the Lord has entrusted a mission of ruling on earth by the *heavenly praises* to those who yearn for the worship in spirit and truth, and to those who believe that everything is completed in praise. And I think that the mission has already begun.

The book of the Revelation is difficult to understand. One reason is

that I cannot grasp the stream of time. I want to intellectually understand the incidents in sequence that are to take place in the end time, applying each of them to the present time. However, when I read the book, questions arise one after another and confuse me. After the Revelation Concert, however, I feel my daily life completely enveloped in the world of the Revelation. And I realize that I do not need to understand what would happen because the book of the Revelation was written not merely to tell and warn us about the incidents in the end time.

The key to read the Revelation is “eternity.” It is different from the other books in the Bible such as the Gospels or Paul’s letters to the churches. John wrote what was shown to him directly by God in heaven. Since it was written in eternity, I believe we should understand it also in eternity. It would be impossible if we try to understand the meaning of the Revelation in the dimension restricted by time. I see eternity in the resounding tunes of the *heavenly praises*.

I once saw the past and the future coexist with the “present” and felt that it was “eternity.” And now I see the same eternity in the resounding tunes of the *heavenly praises*. It is the world where the beginning and the end exist at the same time and where the Lamb who was slain and the risen Lord reside at the same time. I cannot express it in words, but if I dare to say, the “cross” which happened two thousand years ago exist at every moment beyond time. The world of eternity is not limited by time and space.

Last July I thought I had a glimpse of eternity in my actual life. It happened when I helped send out “The Vine,” a monthly periodical of our church, to the subscribers. We put a payment slip for ordering books and CDs in the last page of each copy. There were two hundred copies, and before starting the work, we counted two hundred payment slips twice lest we should make mistakes. However, opening the last page, we found a payment slip already put in five copies. So, five extra slips were supposed to be left, but to our surprise, there was no extra. I could not help thinking that space warp might have taken place. Through this experience, I thought that the heaven unlimited by time and space became closer to us.

Recalling it now again, I feel that there is God’s message in it: “Know that you live in eternity.” I think that to live in the world without

December 2, 2007

limitation of time and space means to give praise beyond time and space.

And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all round and within, and day and night they never cease to sing, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty, who was and is and is to come!"
(Revelation 4:8 RSV)

When I think of giving praise beyond time and space, the four living creatures come to my mind. They can fly beyond time with their six wings and see the past, the present and the future with their eyes all around their wings. Through the Revelation Concert the Lord said to us, "Give praise as the four living creatures," and now I think it means to sing the *heavenly praises* beyond time and space.

Now I find the magnificent plan of God hidden in the words, "Everything is completed in praise," far beyond my imagination. The praise will flow to the beginning and the end of the earth beyond time, and heal and redeem all generations.

The time of Isaiah 55:5 has come. I believe people will come to the Lord from all the places, from the past and the future. The Lord has entrusted us with the mission as priests who worship in spirit and truth. I sincerely wish to respond to the desire of the Lord.

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