

THE REVOLUTION OF WORSHIP¹

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ABSTRACT: Christian's view of worship has been revolutionized that bears great consequences in history. To grasp this notion, one needs to understand the concept of time that includes aion (age/era). There have been many turn-overs of Aions in history, but the greatest one was revolutionized by Jesus. What Jesus does was forthtold by David, who revolutionized worship to consists not only of sacrifices but also of praises. The revolution of worship by Jesus bears several implications in our current practice. Worship is not a one dimensional of 'here and now' reality, but in fact a reality that is greater than the church herself.

KEYWORDS: *Aion; worship; David; Jesus; body; theater.*

ABSTRAK: Pandangan kekristenan akan ibadah telah mengalami revolusi yang membawa konsekuensi yang besar di dalam sejarah. Untuk memahami perihal ini, kita perlu memahami konsep waktu yang mencakup tentang aion (zaman/ era). Telah terjadi banyak perputaran aion di dalam sejarah, tetapi perputaran terbesar merupakan revolusi yang dikerjakan Yesus. Apa yang Yesus lakukan telah dikerjakan oleh Daud mendahului zamannya, dimana Daud merevolusi ibadah bukan hanya sebatas memberikan korban persembahan tetapi juga puji-pujian. Revolusi dari ibadah oleh Yesus membawa beberapa implikasi di dalam kegiatan ibadah kita. Ibadah bukanlah bersifat satu dimensi dalam realita 'disini dan sekarang', tetapi sesungguhnya suatu realita yang melampaui bahkan gereja sendiri.

KATA KUNCI: *Aion; ibadah; Daud; Yesus; tubuh; teater.*

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Introduction

What is a worship? Or if we want to focus more, what is the worship of the church? The answer may not be so obvious since worship has been carried out throughout centuries with perhaps less reflection towards this practice nowadays.

The subject being discussed in this article is about the revolution of worship. But first we also have to know what revolution means. Therefore, our first discussion is about time which presupposes the discussion about changes in worship. Thereafter, the author seeks to investigate biblically the changes that come in the Old Testament worship under the rule of David; whether such change being introduced was justified. The revolution is then carried on at the time of Jesus, who is known as the Son of David. A few correlations are made between David and Jesus in view of the revolution in worship that they have introduced. This article ends with a definition of worship that should expand our perspective due to the straitjacket paradigm introduced by Immanuel Kant.

Three Kinds of Time

The figure below shows the three kinds of time can be conceived within its character.

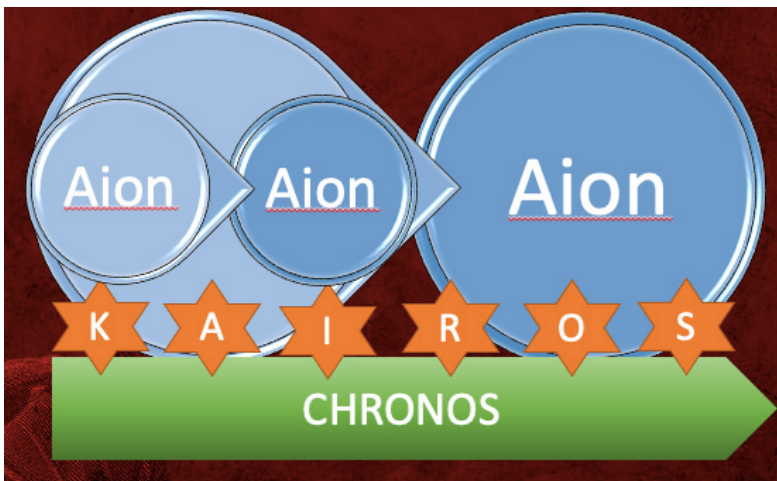


Figure 1 Three kinds of time

The three words that describe each time are *chronos*, *kairos* and *aion*.²

² The three notions of time though is scriptural, yet inspired by Matthew David Segall, "Minding Time: Chronos, Kairos, and Aion in an Archetypal Cosmos," (May 15, 2015). <https://footnotes2plato.com/2015/05/15/minding-time-chronos-kairos-and-aion-in-an-archetypal-cosmos/>

Chronos that can be simply described as time. It is time as created that runs continuously, unceasingly from the time it starts. *Chronos* is time that runs forward. *Kairos* is a different kind of time; it is time within time.³ *Kairos* can be found hidden in *Chronos*. It is like moments of opportunity. Thus, *kairos*-time seems to be coming towards us who are moving in tandem with *chronos*. As ‘moment’, *kairos* can change the course in time. A ‘captured’ *kairos* creates a momentum, whereafter time simply became a monument. There is however a third kind of time which is *aion*. *Aion* is a characterized time with its own ‘spatial sphere’. A certain event may act like the hinge between *aions* in history, e.g. 1517 of the reformation, 1776 of USA, 1789 of France, and 1945 of Indonesia. For the case of Indonesia, 1945 marks the change of time from imperialism to independence. The character of time has changed and will no longer return to its previous character. However, it is possible to conceive *aions* within *aion*. Since the great change was done by Jesus, there have been multiple shifts of *aions* within the previous *aion* before Jesus. It is in this third kind of time that we will see how worship was revolutionized.

The Revolution of Worship by David

At Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20:22-26, Moses introduced a communal worship in Israel after the nation was released from Egypt and her bonding of covenant with God. Israel’s worship is centered in the tabernacle, or later the temple of God (Exo. 25:9, 1 Chr. 6:32). The worship itself has an inner center at the most holy (or double holy) place where the triune God’s presence who is the triple holy is there, represented by the ark. The ritual of Israel’s worship is centered on the sacrifices to be offered either daily or on certain days based on the Torah commandments. For hundreds of years this has been the case until David introduced a new element in its practice.

The journey of the ark needs to be first recapped since it marks the importance of the revolution. The ark was carried by Joshua, upon the death by Moses, to the promised land. It settled at Shiloh after the victorious conquering (Jos. 18:1) until its captured by the Philistines that resulted the death of Eli the priest (1 Sam. 4:11). After seven months of ‘capture’ which results to the upside down of the Philistines, the ark was returned to Israel and stayed in the house of Abinadab (1 Sam. 7:1). The ark was abandoned during the time of Saul. It was only in 2 Samuel 6 that the ark came up into the stage of Israel. The story of the placement of the ark took its narrative

Cf. C. H. Pinnock, “Time,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 852-3.

³ Cf. Stephen Tong, *Waktu dan Hikmat*, 10th impression. (Surabaya: Momentum, 1990, 2010), 35.

in 2 Samuel 6.

What marks the transition? 2 Samuel 5 provides us the context.⁴ David has gained a full confidence of all Israel to be the sole king in Israel (2 Sam 5:1-5). The death of Ish-boseth marks the end of Saul's dynasty (2 Sam. 4). David was able to capture Jerusalem, thereafter made it as his new capital, shifting it from Hebron (2 Sam 5:6-16). There is also a record of David's victorious battle against the Philistines, the enemy that has been fighting, not only with Saul, but also since the time of Samson (2 Sam 5:17-25). Thus, 2 Samuel 5 signifies David's achievements and his recognition as king both within and outside Israel's premises. 2 Samuel 6 narrates the procession of the Ark with David himself leading its entering Jerusalem.

The procession then is the hinge of its *aion* transition of the established new king. But who is the true king? Unlike Saul who sought his own glory and disregarded the true worship, David knows the true king is the LORD himself. During the procession, David as a king has the full right to wear his crown, dress in his mighty armor, and even possibly ride a horse. Instead, he used the priestly attire of linen ephod (2 Sam. 6:14). The whole scene was captured the attention of Michal binti Saul. As the daughter of the previous King, she despised David for not properly dressed as a king (2 Sam. 6:16). All these remarks will then be fully reconciled in the next section with the account of what Jesus does for us as our king.

What is important is that there is an additional element to worship which is added by David.⁵ What used to be only the sacrifice ritual was then accompanied by the singing of praises. The accounts of 1 Chronicles 6:31 (ESV, *These are the men whom David put in charge of the service of song in the house of the LORD after the ark rested there.*) and 15:16 (ESV, *David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy.*) provide the missing account in the 2 Samuel.⁶

An important question could be raised, whether it is allowed for David to add this music element to worship? Is this not like giving an unauthorized fire before the Lord (Lev. 10:1)? Nowadays we took for granted that music is inseparable in any church worship.⁷ But prior to David's revolution, singing

⁴ Cf. Peter J. Leithart, *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel* (Moscow: Canon Press, 2003).

⁵ Cf. Daniel I. Block, *For the Glory of God: Recovering A Biblical Theology of Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014), 228-9 only states the fact of David's personal gifts and accomplishments as a musician, but does not give an account why David incorporates singing in the temple worship. His reference to 2 Sam. 23:1-3 is helpful, but no clear correlation with the time reference, i.e. when the ark was transported.

⁶ J. A. Thompson, *1, 2 Chronicles*, vol. 9, *New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 87. "[1 Chr. 6:31-32] are the strongest traditions in the Bible that David was associated with music."

⁷ Block however seems to disagree with this notion. Cf. Daniel I. Block, "True Worship: It Turns out the Bible's Idea of Worship Is Mostly about Posture, Not Music or Praise." *Christianity Today* 63, no. 4 (May

praises was not formalized.⁸ So, what justifies the addition to worship? One insight that justifies is Jesus' saying to the Samaritan woman, "God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. (ESV, Jn 4:24)"

One thing for sure, David would not dare to add what the LORD would not be pleased with. It was during the first attempt to transfer the ark that the LORD was angry with Uzza and struck him immediately. This incident necessarily takes a deep reflection to whatever intention David may attempt in revolutionizing worship. Another reason that justifies David's additional musical element is the existential experience that David had in his earlier days. David was first recruited by king Saul to ease the disturbance that Saul had due to the evil spirit (1 Sam. 16:14ff). David would then play his lyre, and possibly sang psalms on the occasions.⁹ By doing so, the evil spirit departs from Saul. So, David has the spirit of holiness mark that registered to his praises ministry.¹⁰ Thus, this addition becomes a necessary element to what constitutes a worship. The basic elements of a true worship are sacrifice and singing praise.¹¹ One was instructed by God to Moses and the other was added by David.

The Revolution of Worship by Jesus as the Son of David

The great transition of revolution in worship happens at both the death and resurrection-ascension of Jesus. The significance of Christ's death is shown in Hebrews 10:19-20: "*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,*" It is interesting that all the gospels relate the significance of Christ's death with the tear of the temple's veil that keep the most holy place apart. All accounts in Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, and Luke 23:45 similarly tells that the curtain of the temple was torn in two. In John, however, there is no explicit reference to the curtain. Instead, what we read is the piercing of Jesus' side with a spear (John 19:34). So far no commentaries on John understand this piercing with the temple's curtain incident.¹² However, this is precisely what was understood by the author

2019): 44–48.

⁸ Block, *For the Glory of God*, 228 writes that the claim tabernacle worship involved no music is an argument from silence, yet he concludes that music "is neither indispensable for nor the primary element in biblical worship."

⁹ Yakub Kartawidjaja, *Music in Martin Luther's Theology* (PhD diss., Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn, 2020), p.77

¹⁰ Cf. Exodus 39:30, ESV, They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."

¹¹ It is possible to argue that prayer is another way of expressing what sacrifice really means; while singing praises is none other than prayer in itself. Cf. Robert W. Jenson, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1: *The Triune God* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), part III: Chp.11. Sec. VI.

¹² Cf. George R. Beasley-Murray, *John, Word Biblical Commentary* Vol. 36 (Waco: Word Books,

of Hebrews, the curtain is Jesus' flesh. By the tearing apart, the redeemed sinners could have access through a new and living way to the holy God in the holiest place.

The revolution also takes place in another level with the resurrection-ascension of Jesus. Hebrews 8:1-2 "Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man." What took place in this account is a shift to a new aion that is analogous to the context of David. There is a new king established with Jesus' ascension. This is shown through the preaching of Peter (Acts 2:34-35) on the day of Pentecost about Jesus who fulfilled the prophecy in Psalm 110. 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool.'"

The other similarity with David's revolution was the ministry of Jesus. Like David as the King in his time, Jesus is the true King, even the king of kings forever and ever. Yet, Hebrew 8:2 says Jesus is a minister in the holy places (τῶν ἁγίων λειτουργός). How can this fact be reconciled that the King of kings in his glory be a minister in the holy places? Again, the office that appears in ministry is not the king, but rather the priest. David wore a linen ephod, what does Jesus wear in his ascension? Jesus wore our human body. It is the same body that Jesus was incarnated, crucified, resurrected and ascended. With that body, the high priest who in the past administration represented the people of God with his twelve stones, Jesus as our high priest represents us with his human body. Yes, the resurrected body Jesus is a glorified body, and yet the body also bears the continuity of the crucifixion with the signs of the pierced nails and spear in his body that he shows to Thomas (John 20:24ff). Thus lies the humility of Jesus as our *leitourgos*.

The third parallel of similarities of Jesus revolutionizing worship and David is in the matter of praise. One may wonder when on earth did Jesus ever lead the praises of God's people. On this matter, we need to remember of the two basic elements of worship: sacrifice and praises. The ministry of Jesus on earth is focused on the perfect offering of the sacrifice; that Jesus lived his life as that perfect sacrifice for substitution. Only after the accomplishment of the sacrificial offering can the ministry be carried on with

1987); Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987, 1992, trans. 1997); D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids: Inter-Varsity Press; Eerdmans, 1991), 623; Gerald L. Borchert, *John 12-21*, vol. 25B, *New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002), 274; Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004); Andrew Paterson, *Opening Up John's Gospel, Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2010), 168.

giving praises. This ministry is well connected with the Holy Spirit as we discussed earlier in David's revolution. The apostle Paul connects it well the notion of being filled with the Spirit with singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:18b-19). When was the Spirit being poured out? On the Pentecost, at the procession of the King entering the holy place in heaven, the true tabernacle. Thus, the author of Hebrews is impeccable by quoting psalm 22 in Hebrews 2:12 that "*I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.*"¹³ One important note that we may add is David was way ahead of his time by introducing the praises element in worship. For in 1 Chronicle 6:32 it says that "*They ministered with song before the tabernacle of the tent of meeting until Solomon built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they performed their service according to their order.*" The wise Solomon lacked the wisdom of his father in worshipping God.

Some Implications of Jesus' Revolution of Worship

The first implication that we can draw from Jesus' revolution of worship is that we need to recognize that worship is a greater reality than the church herself. It is not accurate if we keep the notion that the church is the one who conducts a worship for God. The Roman Catholic falls to the mistake of this notion with her notion of the supper. The power is attributed to the church, in particular the priesthood to transform the elements of the supper into the body and blood of Christ. Reformed Protestants, especially John Calvin understood better that the true body and blood of Christ is in heaven, and the church is participating in that worship.¹⁴ The church is being lifted up, raised by the Spirit who joined us with the body of Christ that needs to be kept for a while in heaven (Acts 3:20-21).¹⁵

This notion is not entirely novel, for various parts of scripture have shown us the prior of heavenly worship before ours. To Moses, that the earthly worship is to copy what has been shown of heavenly worship (Exo. 25:40). To Isaiah who saw the vision of heavenly worship of the Seraphims who praises 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts.' (Isa 6:3). The same scene was revealed to John of Patmos who records that the praises never cease but lifted up day and night (Rev. 4:8). In fact, this subconscious participation has been incorporated in the formulation of doxology:

¹³ Cf. David L. Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 218. Allen fails to connect of Jesus singing praises with his role as *leitourgos* in Hebrews 8:2.

¹⁴ John Calvin, *Short Treatise on the Supper of our Lord in Which is Shown Its True Institution, Benefit, and Utility* (1540), in *Treatises on The Sacraments: Catechism of the Church of Geneva, Forms of Prayer, And Confessions of Faith, Tracts* (Fearn: Christian Focus, Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2002), 187.

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles. *The Library of Christian Classics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 4.17.18.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
 Praise Him all creatures here below
 Praise Him above ye heav'nly host
 Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
 Amen

There is a unity of worship in heaven and on earth towards God in our sacred assemblies. The church transcends the spatial and temporal boundary of worship to participate the true worship in heaven.

It is at this point that we as Christians should critically reject the dominating influence of Immanuel Kant, the enlightenment philosopher.¹⁶ Kant's philosophy is a consistent project trying to restrict human's paradigm within the realm of reason.¹⁷ Furthermore, he introduced two *a priori* necessary conditions that limit one's paradigm, namely space and time.¹⁸ In worship, the church should be aware to boldly proclaim that we transcend such limitations.¹⁹

The second implication of Jesus' revolution of worship is the significance of body in worship. The unity of heaven and earth in worship is due to the reception of Jesus with his body in heaven. The standard of worship cannot be changed as to what one wants or desires. But isn't it a rather obvious fact that a Christian worship is different than other religions? The other religions have a notion of God who is great, and the understanding of one's presence before the great God brings to one's humble submission in often bowing position with face as close as possible to the floor. Whereas in the worship setting of the church, Christians dare to sit on chairs throughout the service. Where does the boldness come from? The fact is that there was never a chair as one of the utensils in the tabernacle/ temple worship. All the priests have to stand in their service (Heb. 10:11). The reason Christians dare to sit during the church's service is because our worship leader is also seated on the right side of the Father. Paul also mentions that we are seated

¹⁶ Anthony C. Scigliano, "Prometheus and Kant: Neutralizing Theological Discourse and Doxology." *Modern Theology* 25, no. 3 (July 2009): 397. Scigliano argues that Kant does not permit God the freedom of self-revelation for us (p.388); that revelation is banished (p.407); and neutralization was done that prohibits our speaking of God in terms of the biblical form (p.407).

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, repr. 1781, 1998).

Cf. Frederick Coplestone, *A History of Philosophy: Vol. 6 Wolff to Kant*, 5th impression (London: Search Press, New York: Paulist Press, 1960, 1977), 198.

¹⁸ Kant, *Critique*, 172-192. Coplestone, *History*, 197, 235 ff.

¹⁹ Referring to Brueggemann, Rolf Jacobson argues that lamenting works similarly like praise. It is hard to miss the notice of Kant's tyrannical rule in a life without lament/ praise. "The absence of lament makes a religion of coercive obedience the only possibility." See Rolf A. Jacobson, "The Costly Loss of Praise," *Theology Today* 57, no. 3 (October 2000): 375-85. Further Jacobson sees that when we cease to praise, our world is reduced to an impoverished, suffocating possibility (p.382).

with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:6).²⁰ Christians worship differently and boldly due to Jesus' revolution.

The last implication of Jesus' revolution of worship is the importance of the worship of the church. The church does not only participate in the heavenly worship, but the worship of here and now is also important. We can draw from Calvin a few insights on this matter. In *Institutes* 3.20.23, Calvin writes, "God willed to appoint the angels to care for our salvation. Consequently, they attend sacred assemblies, and the church is for them a theater in which they marvel at the varied and manifold wisdom of God [Eph. 3:10]." What does Ephesians 3:20 say? "*So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.*" The church oftentimes, if not altogether, ignored by the worldly leaders/ rulers on earth. In fact, as we have quoted earlier, Solomon in his wisdom lacks the interest in worshipping God despite of him building the temple for God. Solomon spends a prolonged six more years in building his palace than God's temple. However, while the church is being ignored by worldly rulers, she is being observed by the rulers in heavenly places; Because the church has manifold wisdom of God that captures their interest.

Another important contribution from Calvin can be found in his commentary on 1 Peter 1:12 "It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look." When the spirit of Christ is being poured out, the church has a role to play. The church is the living images of the kingdom of Christ. Whose role does the church need to play? The role of Christ on earth. The worship of the church is where the church is playing her role as Christ through preaching of the word, conducting sacraments, intercessory prayers, and also singing of praises. The people of God are not assembling in the church building to watch rather than to be watched. The church is the theatrical performers for the heavenly hosts. When taken to a greater extent, coupled with Calvin's idea of the cosmos as the theater of God's glory where God has the main role as the Creator and the redeemer, the church performs before God in our daily conducts.²¹ It is *Coram Deo*, living before God.

²⁰ Cf. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God's Way of Reconciliation. Exposition of Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972).

²¹ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1559), ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles. *The Library of Christian Classics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 1.6.2.

The church has an active participation in our worship conduct, both in receiving and giving. The receiving part can be conceived in the preaching of the word and conducting of sacraments. At this part, the people participate actively in the preaching of the Word with their hearing senses. Even more so, the eucharist necessitates a greater level of participation of all the senses: the hearing of the explanation, the seeing, the touching, to a certain extent the sniffing, and also the tasting of the bread and wine. We are expected to be a recipient in all these activities.

In the giving part, the church is expected to act in reciprocal to God through singing of praises and praying. Both of which are assisted by the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, to remind people of the importance of the body, the apostle Paul exhorts Christians in Rome “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Rom. 12:1)”. We worship not only with our tongues, but the whole body is involved.

Conclusion

The worship of the church consists of two elements: the sacrificial element and the singing of praises element. The sacrifices were revealed by God through Moses, while the singing of praises were moved by the Spirit through David. Both sacrifice and praises are closely related to the ministry of Jesus. First, on earth, Jesus’ ministry was to prepare a perfect sacrifice for a true worship, accomplished with his death on the cross that reveals the new and living way to God’s presence. Secondly, in heaven, Jesus’ ministry was to bring the fruit of his perfect obedience by bringing praises to God.

So, what is the church’s worship? The worship of the church is a living testimony of our imaging Christ in this new era (*aión*) in which Christ as the head of the church is our worship leader in heaven, and the heavenly hosts watch over the church as the body of Christ on the earth.

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