

# A WORD ON WORSHIP

## REVIEW OF MESSAGE FROM MARCH 6, 2016

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*Hear Sunday Sermons at* [www.SunriseTC.org](http://www.SunriseTC.org)

Revelation 18:9-10

*And the kings of the earth, who committed acts of immorality and lived sensuously with her, will weep and lament over her when they see the smoke of her burning, standing at a distance because of the fear of her torment, saying, "Woe, woe, the great city, Babylon, the strong city! For in one hour your judgment has come."*



In 1962, philosopher-scientist Thomas Kuhn coined the term "paradigm shift" to signal a massive change in the way a community thinks about a particular topic. Examples of paradigm shifts include Copernicus's discovery that the earth revolves around the sun, Einstein's theory of relativity, and Darwin's theory of evolution. Each changed the world of thought (some for better, some for worse) in a fundamental way. From a political perspective, Constantine's Edict of Milan, issued in AD 313, was the beginning of a major paradigm shift that signaled the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the medieval period. That edict legitimated Christianity and impressed upon it the Empire's stamp of approval.

From a theological perspective - specifically an eschatological one - the Edict of Milan also signaled a monumental paradigm shift from the well-grounded premillennialism of the ancient church fathers to the amillennialism or postmillennialism. In the two centuries that led up to the edict, two crucial interpretive errors found their way into the church that made conditions ripe for the paradigm shift incident to the Edict of Milan. The second century fathers failed to keep clear the biblical distinction between Israel and the church. Then, the third century fathers abandoned a literal method of interpreting the Bible in favor of spiritualized allegory. Once the distinction between Israel and the church became blurred and a literal hermeneutic was lost, the societal changes occasioned by the Edict of Milan caused fourth century fathers to reject premillennialism in favor of Augustinian amillennialism.

A simple concordance search of the word "Israel" in the New Testament will lead to the conclusion that the New Testament writers never equated the church with the nation of Israel. However, what the New Testament writers did not do, the post-apostolic fathers quickly did. As the church began to be dominated by people without Jewish roots, the hardening of the Jews' hearts and the waning hope for Israel's conversion made it easier for the increasingly Gentile church to rally against Judaism and to seek a replacement theology. The basic premise of the early fathers was that God had permanently cut the nation of Israel off as his people as a result of their disobedience and idolatry in the Old Testament and their rejection and crucifixion of Jesus in the New.

The bottom line, of course, is that we must continually go back to the Scriptures as our only source for "doing theology." As much as we may respect and admire the early church fathers, or, for that matter, the reformers, the puritans, or a particular modern spiritual leader, we must always remember to be Bereans, checking their conclusions and reasoning against the plumb line of God's Word.

**Sunrise Community Church**  
*Come acknowledge the Lord in our midst*  
**EVERY SUNDAY BEGINNING AT 8:45 A.M.**

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