

The background is a teal-to-blue gradient with faint, semi-transparent circular patterns and a scale. The scale on the left side has markings from 150 to 260 in increments of 10. There are also several circular diagrams with arrows indicating clockwise or counter-clockwise rotation.

# OUR NEW LIFE WITH GOD: WEIGHT OR GIFT?

(WHOSE PRIESTHOOD IS IT ANYWAY?)

AUGUST 28, 2016 | WONDERFUL MERCY CHURCH





## 1 PETER 2:5,9

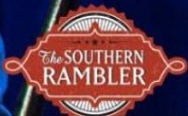
“Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” [NRSV]

# WHOSE PRIESTHOOD IS IT ANYWAY?

- The priesthood of Christ replaced by a quasi-democratic focus on the priesthood of all believers has enormous, real time implications for us
- The priesthood of believers, as we've understood and practiced it, has made Christian life about us and what we do, and like the priests of Israel, we'd better get it right

*“They said in church that we are going to sit at Jesus’ feet and worship him for eternity. That is more fun for him than it is for me. If I live a good Christian life and get to heaven, I want to have a good time.”*

[Paul Thorn, *Southern Rambler*, May 2016]



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# WHOSE PRIESTHOOD IS IT ANYWAY?

- We've become our own priests, the sole mediators of our own worship
- “Worship is what we do ... we worship God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we pray to Christ as God, we invoke the Holy Spirit, we respond to the preaching of the Word, we intercede for the world, we offer our money, time and service to God, we remember the death of Jesus in the **Sacrament.**” [James B. Torrance, “The Vicarious Humanity of Christ,” in *The Incarnation* (Edinburgh: Handsel) ©1981, pp. 129– 30.]

## N.T. WRIGHT IN *HEBREWS FOR EVERYONE*

“So where is [Jesus] now, what’s he doing and how does it affect us? Jesus, having died and been raised from the dead, was then exalted, in the ascension, through all the different layers of ‘the heavens,’ right to the very heart, to the throne of the Father himself. He didn’t, in other words, simply go to a convenient resting place in some spiritual sphere where he could remain, satisfied with having accomplished his earthly work. He went right to his Father’s inner courtroom, in order that by representing us there, by interceding for us with the Father, he might continue to implement the work he had accomplished on earth.



## N.T. WRIGHT IN *HEBREWS FOR EVERYONE*

“So when we come to pray to the heavenly Father, we are not shouting across a great gulf. We are not trying to catch the attention of someone who has little or no concern for us. Verse 16 puts it like this: we are coming to ‘the throne of grace’ and we may and must come boldly and confidently. This isn’t arrogance. Indeed, if we understand who Jesus is, what he’s done and what he’s still doing on our behalf, the real arrogance would be to refuse to accept his offer of standing before the Father on our behalf, to imagine that we had to bypass him and try to do it all ourselves.”

## HEBREWS 10:21-22

“And since we now have a magnificent King-Priest to welcome us into God’s house, <sup>22</sup>we come closer to God and approach him with an open heart, fully convinced by faith that nothing will keep us at a distance from him. For our hearts have been sprinkled with blood to remove impurity and we have been freed from an accusing conscience and now we are clean, unstained, and presentable to God inside and out!” [PASSION]

# OUR HIGH PRIEST MAKES OUR NEW LIFE A GIFT

- “The Son has taken what is ours (our confused, tempted struggling humanity that is unable to pray and worship in truth) and has sanctified it in himself so that we might have what is his (healed, cleansed, perfected humanity). So now we are given to share, by the Spirit, in his worship, in his prayer, in his intercessions for us and for the world and, of course, in his ongoing mission from the Father to the world.” [Alan J. Torrance in *Christology, Ancient and Modern: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics* (Kindle Locations 4137-4140, Zondervan)]

# OUR HIGH PRIEST MAKES OUR NEW LIFE A GIFT

- When our new life with God is all about what we do (and had better not do), then we're left with nothing but the religious answer: judgment

# OUR HIGH PRIEST MAKES OUR NEW LIFE A GIFT

- We have a High Priest who no longer holds our sin against us, and therefore the job of the Church is not to hold anyone's sin against them!
- **2 Corinthians 5:19**  
“For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation.” [NLT]



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