

TRUE FAITH CONTINUES...

True faith continues on until death and does not draw back to perdition but rather believes to the saving of the soul (Heb. 10:38-39). And so Hebrews 11:13 says, “These all died in faith”; and again in 11:35, “not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection”; and finally in 11:39, “all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith”.

- They ALL had an active faith that continued!

And yet note that while they all obtained a good testimony through faith, and all had a faith that actively continued until death, yet NONE of them received **the promise**. Note in Hebrews 11:33 that they did obtain certain promises (cf. Heb. 6:15), but the point here is that they did not receive **THE PROMISE**.

THE PROMISE refers to the complete comprehensive package of what is found in Christ. It refers to all that was promised in the Abrahamic Covenant that finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

THE ULTIMATE PROMISE is that which relates to Christ. Those who lived in the OT saw Him from afar in types, and shadows (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10-11). But they never entered into the full good of the Messianic PROMISE. **The Promise** relates to all things BETTER in Christ. It refers to the better New Covenant and its accompanying better promises (cf. Heb. 8:6). **The Promise** relates to intimate relationship and access to God. It refers to an eternal dwelling place with God. It relates to resurrection glory and the coming kingdom. All of these realities are wrapped up in the **Messianic Promise**, which is embedded in the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Heb. 6).

In short, **THE PROMISE** is the Messianic PROMISE because in Him is found every blessing. All redemptive history comes to culmination in Him. That’s the whole point of Hebrews which from many different angles emphasizes that Jesus is BETTER. God promises BETTER and this BETTER is found in Christ! That’s why the book begins with God in these last days has “***spoken to us by His Son***” (1:2). He is the culmination of all things BETTER. Especially in view in the context of Hebrews 11 is the permanent/eternal homeland – the permanent place of rest and security. None of these OT saints ever knew the realization of THE PROMISED permanent homeland.

Hebrews 11:40 (NKJV)

40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

The OT saints looked forward to Christ, but they never experienced completeness in Christ because His once for all sacrifice for sin had not yet occurred. But now Christ has come and in Christ we have something better – namely the experience of New Covenant realities. The sacrifice of Christ is now an accomplished fact for us, and not merely a future hope. In that sense God has “***provided something better for us***” and we enjoy many of those blessings right now (cf. Heb. 8:6-13).

However, in the plan of God, none of us has yet known the final state of PERFECTION. God’s intention is that both the OT saints and the NT saints should be made PERFECT together. We will go into the KINGDOM together! In the grand scheme of salvation, God did not want the OT saints to know this perfection apart from us, the New Testament saints.

We have now come to know the better arrangement of the New Covenant, and yet the finalized PERFECTION in the kingdom awaits both OT and NT saints. We will experience this together. In this, there is a UNITY in God’s program of redemption.

The challenge of Hebrews 11 is that just as the OT saints in FAITH looked forward to the promise, but yet never saw the completion of it, so we too should emulate them and press on in FAITH as we anticipate the future PERFECTION promised in Christ by God. As believers, we have already entered into the “better” in Christ, but the PERFECTION of it remains to be seen, and this is where FAITH comes in.

If the OT saints persevered in faith without having any experience of “the better things in Christ,” how much more should we persevere in faith who have tasted of the better realities. The point of Hebrews 11 is that genuine faith perseveres, awaiting the ultimate fulfillment of God’s promise (cf. 10:36).

True faith believes that the best is yet to be according to God’s promise. And it persists in that faith through both good times and hard times. A true saving faith does not draw back but rather perseveres until death.

- May God help each one of us to obtain a good testimony through faith.