

Hebrews 11:39-40

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All of these faithful believers gained approval, but they have not yet gained the promise.

Although many of the examples of faith above resulted in a great deliverance of some sort, God's promise of a full restoration of the earth and an end to death still remained to be fulfilled. So even those who experienced victories still did not receive their full inheritance. Those great believers of the Old Testament will receive their great reward together with us from the era of the New Testament. We hold this in common: the greatest of rewards will be given to those who walk in faith. That is why their example is so relevant to us. And if we are faithful, we can join them in being completed.

All of these people who have come before us, who have lived lives of courageous faith have *gained approval* from God but they *did not receive what was promised*. Abraham died without receiving the promised land (his earthly rest) and all of these believers died without receiving what God promised them. In Hebrews chapter 4, Paul reminded us that the promise remains of entering God's rest. This rest is the inheritance believers can receive if they remain faithful during this life. These believers have not yet received their inheritance, but they have already *gained approval through their faith*.

Paul explains why they have not yet received their inheritance. The believers of the Old Testament will not *be made perfect* without the believers under the New Covenant. The phrase "*be made perfect*" is the Greek word "teleo" which means to be made perfect or complete. The idea is to finish what was started. The faithful believers from the past have not yet been made perfect.

In the future, all believers who lived faithfully will be brought into Jesus' kingdom and each will be rewarded according to his faithfulness on earth, then we will be made complete along with those Old Testament believers who gained approval. There are many instances where the Bible indicates that one of the greatest of rewards for those who are faithful is to serve alongside Jesus in ruling a restored earth. For instance, in Revelation 3:21 Jesus tells the lukewarm believers in the church of Laodicea that if they will receive His chastening and repent, to overcome as Jesus overcame, they will receive a

reward to share His throne. It is pretty amazing to consider that each believer has the opportunity to gain the same sort of reward for faithfulness alongside Daniel or Joshua.

Biblical Text:

³⁹ And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.