

# Hebrews 11:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

## Analysis

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**And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise.** This verse concludes the catalog of Old Testament faith heroes with sobering observation: despite exemplary faith that earned divine commendation, none received the ultimate promise during their earthly lives. "These all" (houtoi pantes, οὗτοι πάντες) encompasses everyone mentioned in Hebrews 11—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, and others. The comprehensive scope underscores a universal pattern: Old Testament saints lived and died without seeing Messiah's coming or new covenant's establishment.

"Having obtained a good report" (martyrēthentes, μαρτυρηθέντες) means they received witness, testimony, commendation—specifically from God Himself. This passive participle indicates divine approval: God testified to their faith's genuineness. Their faith earned heavenly recognition even when it didn't produce earthly fulfillment. "Through faith" (dia tēs pisteōs, διὰ τῆς πίστεως) emphasizes faith as the sole basis for divine commendation—not works, ethnic heritage, or religious performance, but trust in God's promises.

"Received not the promise" (ouk ekimisanto tēn epangelian, οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν) refers specifically to the ultimate promise—the coming Messiah, the new covenant, redemption's full accomplishment. While they received many individual promises (land, descendants, deliverances), they didn't receive THE promise—Christ Himself and salvation's fulfillment in Him. This non-reception wasn't divine failure but deliberate timing: God planned something better (v. 40).

## Historical Context

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Old Testament believers lived with prophetic glimpses but not full revelation. Abraham saw Messiah's day from afar and rejoiced (John 8:56), but never witnessed incarnation. Prophets foretold Christ's coming, suffering, and glory but didn't see fulfillment (1 Peter 1:10-12). Moses chose Christ's reproach over Egypt's treasures (Hebrews 11:26) yet didn't enter promised land literally or see Messiah physically. This delayed fulfillment tested faith severely. For first-century Jewish Christians tempted to abandon faith under persecution, this verse provided powerful rebuke: if patriarchs and prophets persevered without seeing promises fulfilled, how much more should believers persevere who've witnessed Christ's actual coming, death, and resurrection? The 'better thing' God provided (v. 40) is Christ—the substance of what Old Testament saints glimpsed in shadow. Their faith anticipated; ours commemorates and participates in accomplished redemption. Yet both require the same patient endurance, trusting God's timing and faithfulness.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding that faithful saints died without receiving the promise help us endure delayed fulfillment?
2. Why did God commend their faith even when He didn't grant earthly fulfillment?
3. What does this verse teach about the relationship between faith and immediate gratification?

4. How should knowing that Old Testament believers trusted promises they never saw fulfill affect our confidence in unseen promises?
5. In what ways does this verse challenge contemporary 'prosperity gospel' teaching?

## Interlinear Text

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Καὶ	οὗτοι	πάντες	μαρτυρηθέντες	διὰ	τῆς
And	these	all	having obtained a good report	through	G3588
G2532	G3778	G3956	G3140	G1223	
πίστεως οὐκ ἐκομίσαντο τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν					
faith	not	received	G3588	the promise	
G4102	G3756	G2865		G1860	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 11:13** (Faith): These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

**Hebrews 11:2** (Good): For by it the elders obtained a good report.

**1 Peter 1:12** (Parallel theme): Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.