

Hebrews 11:40

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Analysis

God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. This climactic verse explains why Old Testament saints, despite exemplary faith, didn't receive the ultimate promise in their lifetimes. God 'provided' (problepomenou, προβλεψομένου, 'having foreseen' or 'having planned ahead') 'some better thing for us'—the fuller revelation and greater privileges of the New Covenant in Christ. They looked forward; we look back at Christ's accomplished work.

The phrase 'that they without us should not be made perfect' (hina mē chōris hēmōn teleiōthōsin) indicates all believers throughout history receive consummation together. The Old Testament saints' faith was genuine and saving, but they awaited Christ's actual coming to complete redemption. They died in faith, not having received the promises' fulfillment (verse 13), but God's sovereign plan ordained that final perfection would come corporately to all saints—Old Testament and New Testament believers together—at Christ's return.

This teaches the unity of God's people across all eras. We aren't superior to Old Testament believers in faith or righteousness, only more privileged in revelation. They saw shadows; we see substance. They anticipated; we remember. But the same Messiah saves both, the same Spirit regenerates both, the same glorification awaits both. At the resurrection, Abraham, Moses, David, and all New Testament believers will together receive the eternal inheritance, perfected and glorified as one body of Christ.

Historical Context

Old Testament saints lived in the era of types, shadows, and promises pointing forward to Christ. They had the Law, prophets, sacrificial system, and covenant promises, but not the actual fulfillment. They looked forward by faith to the Messiah who would accomplish redemption. New Testament believers possess fuller revelation—Christ has come, died, risen, sent the Spirit, and established the New Covenant. Yet even we await consummation at Christ's return. The author emphasizes that God's redemptive plan encompasses all eras, bringing all believers to perfection together rather than in stages. This unified people of God, spanning all history, will be completed and glorified corporately.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that Old Testament and New Testament believers are one people of God deepen your understanding of Scripture's unity?
2. What does this verse teach about God's sovereign orchestration of redemptive history according to His predetermined plan?
3. In what ways should you live with the same forward-looking faith as Old Testament saints, awaiting Christ's return and final perfection?

Interlinear Text

τοῦ	θεοῦ	περὶ	ἡμῶν	κρεῖττον	τι	προβλεψαμένου	ἵνα
G3588	God	for	us	better	some	having provided	that
	G2316	G4012	G2257	G2909	G5100	G4265	G2443
μὴ	χωρὶς	ἡμῶν	τελειωθῶσιν				
G3361	without	us	be made perfect				
	G5565	G2257	G5048				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 6:11 (Parallel theme): And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellowservants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

Hebrews 8:6 (Parallel theme): But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Hebrews 7:19 (Creation): For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

Hebrews 9:23 (Parallel theme): It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

Hebrews 5:9 (Creation): And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;