

THE WORD 'PERFECT' IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

The book of Hebrews uses the word "perfect" 14 times. The Greek word is *teleios* and means complete, to make perfect by reaching an intended goal, and to bring to a full end. For believers we have a "perfect" standing in Jesus Christ. Plus we are in the process of becoming more in the image of Jesus Christ through sanctification (Cl.1:28; 1Th.3:13).

| LEGEND: | OC = Old Covenant | OTB = Old Covenant Believers | J = Jesus | B = Believers |
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| J | 1 | "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation PERFECT through sufferings." (Hb.2:10) | The captain of our salvation brings us to glory, yet He suffered | |
| J | 2 | "And being made PERFECT, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hb.5:9) | The Son, as the author of eternal salvation brings glory to those that obey Him, yet He was perfected through suffering. (Hb.5:8-9) | |
| B | 3 | "But strong meat belongeth to them that are OF FULL AGE, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hb.5:14) | Strong meat of Bible doctrine belong to those who do not resist truths which condemns the flesh and our waywardness. | |
| B | 4 | "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto PERFECTION; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Hb.6:1) | They should not be content with their present condition. Spiritual maturity involves receiving and responding appropriately to revealed truth (Hb.5:14) | |
| OC | 5 | "If therefore PERFECTION were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" (Hb.7:11) | The author shows the inferiority of the Mosaic Covenant and its priesthood. Melchizedek preceded Aaron yet is greater and even replaced him. | |
| OC | 6 | "For the law made nothing PERFECT, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God." (Hb.7:19) | God superseded the Levitical priesthood, and the Mosaic Law with one that could bring us into intimate relationship with Him. | |
| J | 7 | "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is CONSECRATED for evermore." (Hb.7:28) | Christ is superior to the Levitical priests because God appointed Him with an oath, and His one sacrifice was 'perfect' since it satisfied God the Father completely. He is perfect and can intercede effectively for us. | |
| OC | 8 | "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service PERFECT, as pertaining to the conscience" (Hb.9:9) | The Old Covenant system of worship did not meet the deepest need of God's people, namely intimate relationship with God. It is possible to fulfill all the outward obligations and still have a conscience that is not right with God. A right relationship with God purifies the conscience. | |
| J | 9 | "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more PERFECT tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building" (Hb.9:11) | This real and perfect tabernacle in heaven has not been made by human hands. And Christ is its real High Priest. You can worship Him anywhere. | |
| OTB | 10 | "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto PERFECT." (Hb.10:1) | The very nature of the Mosaic Law made it impossible to bring believers into intimate relationship with the Father because it dealt with externals. An artist's shadow or outline is preliminary to his adding color (form). | |
| J | 11 | "For by one offering he hath PERFECTED for ever them that are sanctified." (Hb.10:14) | Jesus' sacrifice cleansed our consciences from guilt, and has fitted us to approach God as worshippers. | |
| B | 12 | "God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made PERFECT." (Hb.11:40) | They found faith to be a reliable guide to the future, since they died without experiencing the fulfillment. The implication is that our ultimate reward, like theirs, is eschatological (future). | |
| J | 13 | "Looking unto Jesus the author and FINISHER of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hb.12:2) | It is to Jesus, not the other witnesses, that we are to look toward. Jesus is our model when it comes to persevering. | |
| OTB | 14 | "To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made PERFECT," (Hb.12:23) | Believers are the 'firstborn' whose names are written in Heaven, and are sanctified or set apart unto God. OT saints have been made complete now that Christ has died as the Lamb. | |