

Perfection in Hebrews

The Letter to the Hebrews often speaks of perfection:

- We (the readers) are encouraged to “go on toward perfection” (6:1).
- The hope of being made perfect was not fulfilled for even the most faithful heroes of the Bible (11:40).
- Religious rules and rituals cannot make people perfect (7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1).

What can we do?

- Jesus Christ is the “perfecter of our faith” (12:2).
- Christ himself was made perfect (2:10; 5:8–9; 7:28).
- Then, by a single offering (his death), Christ made perfect for all time those who are sanctified by him (10:14).
- The spirits of the righteous enrolled in heaven have now been made perfect by Christ (12:23), and we look forward to joining them (13:14).

The perfection envisioned here is not simply or primarily moral perfection; Jesus was without sin (4:15), but he still needed to be made perfect. Rather, the idea is completion—people becoming all that they are meant to be. The discipline of learning obedience through suffering contributes to a process of perfection here on earth (5:8–9; 12:11), but this is but a temporal realization of the complete and more glorious salvation that has been accomplished in the heavenly realm.

See David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the “Epistle to the Hebrews”* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).