

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 3, Hebrews 2:5-18: Hope and Help in the Son, 6-min. Video Overview

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Welcome to The Explainer. We're all about breaking down big, complex ideas into stories that are clear and, hopefully, really engaging. So let's just jump right in with this question.

I mean, what if suffering isn't actually a sign that you failed, but it's the very path to glory? For a struggling community back in the first century, this wasn't just some philosophical idea. It was everything. And it's the core of this really brilliant, pretty surprising argument you find in the ancient book of Hebrews.

Now, to really get why this argument was so powerful, you have to put yourself in the shoes of the people who first read it. I mean, these folks were in a tough spot. They were facing some serious social pressure.

We're talking disgrace, losing their status in the community, the whole deal, all because of their faith. And you could imagine they were starting to get worn down, starting to lose hope. And here's the real kicker, the thing that was eating them up inside.

They looked at all this hardship and basically concluded, well, this must be a sign God's not happy with us. We've taken a wrong turn somewhere. So the author of this letter had a huge task.

He had to give them a completely new way of seeing things, a new lens that would connect their suffering directly to their destiny. So how do you do that? How do you totally flip someone's worldview on its head? Well, the author does something pretty amazing. He takes a text they all knew, something they'd sung and prayed for years, Psalm 8, and basically says, you've been missing something.

There's a secret message in here. Now, for forever, this psalm was understood one way. It was this beautiful song all about how awesome humanity is, our special place in creation.

You know, it was about us. But the author of Hebrews, he just zeros in on one little phrase and uses it to turn the whole thing inside out. And this is the big move.

It's a total game changer. He says, hey, what if this psalm isn't about humanity in general at all? What if it's a prophecy about one specific Son of Man, Jesus? And with that one little shift, boom, the entire meaning of the song is transformed. You might be wondering, okay, how does he even make that argument? Well, it's this really clever three-step bit of logic.

First, he grabs onto that title, Son of Man, which, hey, that's what Jesus called himself all the time. And then, and this is the really slick part, he uses a specific translation of the psalm that just cracks the whole thing wide open. Okay, so here's the key detail.

The original Hebrew says humans were made a little bit lower than the angels. But the Greek translation that this community was reading could also be understood as for a little while lower. See the difference? One is about status, the other is about time.

And that little ambiguity was everything. It let the author lay the psalm over Jesus's life story like a template, a temporary lowering of his life on earth, followed by being crowned with glory and honor. All right, so this is a really cool interpretation.

But it's not just some abstract Bible study point. The author doesn't just leave it there. He immediately pivots and shows them how this new reading of the psalm is actually a blueprint for their lives.

He calls Jesus their pioneer. Think about what a pioneer does. They go first; they blaze a trail through rough country so others can follow.

That's the picture here. Jesus's journey through suffering wasn't some mistake or a detour. No, that was the path.

That was the trail he cut to glory. A trail that all these sons and daughters were now invited to walk on. Can you imagine how this would have landed? It's absolutely revolutionary.

It totally reframes everything they're going through. Suddenly, the shame, the hardship, it's not a sign that God is angry with them. Just the opposite.

It's proof. It's like a trail marker showing them they are on the right path, following right in the footsteps of their pioneer. And this new way of seeing things, it didn't just make them feel better.

It had a massive practical benefit. It offered them freedom from the one fear that kind of has a grip on all of us, right? The fear of death. Now, at the time, there were other philosophies dealing with this.

The Stoics, for example, they were all about it. They'd say, look, a wise person, someone like Socrates, can use reason and courage to overcome the fear of death. You can basically train your mind to not be afraid.

But the author of Hebrews says, nope, Jesus did something way bigger. He argues that by becoming one of us, flesh and blood, and actually dying, Jesus didn't just show us how to be brave. He went into the heart of death's territory and destroyed the power that holds people in fear.

This wasn't just a personal win. It was a cosmic, universe-altering victory. And what does that freedom look like in real life? Well, it meant they could stop being timid when faced with injustice.

It meant they didn't have to be controlled by threats anymore. They were free to endure all the shame and loss the world could throw at them, because the biggest threat of all had already been dealt with. They were now liberated to live for something much, much bigger.

So, okay, we've got Jesus as the pioneer who blazes the trail and the victor who defeats the ultimate enemy. But the author adds one more crucial piece to the puzzle, a powerful image for what Jesus is doing right now. He's a high priest who gets it.

Back then, a priest was basically a bridge builder. That's even what the Latin word *pontifex* means. They were the ones who connected the human world to the divine.

They were the brokers who could get you an audience with God. And the author's point is that Jesus is the most qualified person for that job ever. And this brings it all full circle.

We finally see exactly why his suffering was so important. It wasn't a bug. It was a feature.

It was his resume. It was his qualification for the job. Because he lived a real human life.

Because he actually suffered. Because he was tempted and tested. He is now in the perfect position to understand and help anyone who's going through the same stuff.

Just think about what a comfort that would have been. Your leader isn't some far-off, distant God who can't relate. No, he's one of you.

He knows exactly what your pain feels like. Not from a textbook, but from personal experience. He just gets it.

So in the end, the whole point of this massive cosmic story is to make it incredibly personal. The author wants every single person reading this to look at it and think, wow, all of that, all that Jesus went through was for me. It's about giving them hope, but also real, tangible help for the here and now.

And this all leads to one final mind-bending question. The author just completely flips the whole idea of shame on its head. He basically asks, look, if the exalted, glorified Son of God is not ashamed to call you family, then how on earth could you be ashamed to be associated with him? And just like that, the very thing that was causing them disgrace becomes their greatest, most unshakable source of honor.