

Help!

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[0 : 0 0] In Hosea chapter 13, we read that verse 9, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help. In me is thine help.

In this little two-line verse, we have, if you like, almost a little encapsulation, a little brief statement of almost the entire gospel and plan of salvation. O Israel, the O without an H, as I'm sure we've mentioned in the past, when there is an O without an H, it's evocative.

That means it's a form of address. You use the O as an addressing to somebody, as a speaking to somebody, whereas the O-H is more of an exclamation. It's more of a shouting out in a time of extremity or distress.

So the O Israel is speaking directly to who? Israel, the people of God, the church of God. Israel, remember, is the name that Jacob was given after the Lord had wrestled with him at the brook Jabbok and his thigh was out of joint and he said, your name will no more be Jacob, that is, the supplanter, the crooked one. Your name will now be Israel, which means a prince with God.

For as a prince with God has thou wrestled and prevailed because he wouldn't let the angel of God go until he had blessed him. So this is Israel, the people of God, in their privileged condition. A prince with God, one who has had untold privilege and blessing an opportunity and opportunity and God is now speaking directly to his people. O Israel, a people of God, those whom I chose for myself, thou hast destroyed thyself. And it's an address as to the individual. Thou hast destroyed thyself.

[2 : 0 1] This is true of our first parents, of course, who were formed sinless in the garden at the beginning. Just purely by their own decision, they destroyed not only themselves but all their posterity. All the human race that followed became born and conceived in sin because of their sin.

That which they brought into the human race became genetically inherited. Just as all of us inherit genes and traits and characteristics from our ancestors and from our parents and grandparents and so on.

In some ways it may be partly appearance. In other ways it may be characteristics. In other ways it may be aspects of our physique or our body or whatever.

It may be things that are wrong with us. You know, some say, oh yes, well I've got very poor eyesight. But of course his dad had poor eyesight. He's got it from him or his grandfather or whatever. Oh yes, well she's got a bit of a weak heart. But you know, her grandmother had that and her mother had it as well.

So we have these characteristics which for good or ill are inherited. They are passed down. And so our first parents passed down this fatal disease of sin.

[3 : 1 5] But Israel has gone further. Having been blessed with the privilege of being chosen out as a people of God, Israel turned to false gods and to these idols which not only couldn't help them but actually did them damage.

It's as though if you were seeing a ship and you were thinking, oh well you know, it's getting a bit stuffy in here. I need to be able to breathe better. I think I'll just shoot some holes in the hull and then the fresh air will come in and that will be better.

Well maybe some fresh air will come in. But other stuff will come in too and your ship will begin to sink. You will destroy yourself. Destroy the vessel and the means of keeping yourself afloat.

Israel has destroyed thyself. The very things that you looked to your idols for help with are actually your undoing. And when we look to the things of this world, as we so often do, and that's our natural state, we hope to find fulfilment and satisfaction in the things of this world, whether it's in money or job security or there's still some people that think fame and fortune and be rich and famous, that's what they would most want in the world.

And then if you actually look at the lives of those who are rich and famous, you actually read about some of those lives, whether on the internet or magazine, their lives are in a car crash. They've got absolutely millions and millions, but then next thing is that they're looking at divorce settlements to divide up the millions and who's going to get the kids for so long and what properties are divided up and the lawyers are at each other's throats.

[5 : 01] And it's just a disaster. What else do they find that their kids end up with drugs or going off the rails or whatever? And to be rich and famous, which is what so many people think. Wouldn't it be wonderful to be rich and famous?

Well, actually, no, it doesn't tend to be because it brings so much pressure with it that most people cannot actually handle.

We think the things of this world will give us satisfaction. We think our dreams, if we could get to the top of the tree, if only I could be the boss, if I could be my own boss, wouldn't that be wonderful? But being your own boss brings all the pressures with it as well.

So ultimately, the things that we look to, if we leave God out of the picture, end up grinding us down, end up crushing us. But, O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.

Because, like man, like our first parents, so likewise the church of God, in the Old Testament and in the New, wants to take its privileges, thank you very much, we'll have some of that, but don't want the responsibilities with it.

[6 : 16] Don't want, above all, to put God in charge of their lives. Now, to put God in charge of our lives is not a burden and, oh, it's a heavy load and, oh, legalism and keeping rules and so on.

To have God in charge of our lives means the one he has lifted off you. because the Lord now is at the helm. The Lord is the captain on the bridge.

The Lord is the one that now takes charge of your life and your resources and supplying your daily needs. The Lord is the one that you look to and you know that he will not only do it because he loves you, but he has all the resources of the world at his disposal.

Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help. Now, whatever the help is that we need, and we said with the children a few minutes ago how everybody is different and the precise help that we need will be individual to each of us.

It will be unique to each of us. One person struggles with a particular sin that maybe the rest of the world doesn't know about and others may be completely untouched by that sin.

[7 : 31] It's not a problem for them. It's not a temptation. They can go into exactly the situations that that person who really struggles with, they can go into it. It's water off a duck's back. It doesn't trouble them at all.

But something else will be their weakness. Something else will be their problem. Maybe they don't have worries in their lives about this or that, maybe about their family or about money, but they've got other worries that are really grinding them down and really threatening to destroy them.

Whatever the help is that we need, it will be different and unique to each individual person. And whilst we may like to think we can be a help to our neighbours, we can be a help to our family, we each of us know, as Coghav says, the heart knoweth its own bitterness and a stranger that not intermeddled with its joy.

If we each know only the burden of our own hearts, there are those burdens which nobody can reach into. Nobody can actually get to and lift up.

Nobody can change our particular problem or circumstances. Nobody except God. This is what the Lord says, In me is thine help.

[8 : 47] You see with the children, we have the weak heart in the picture of a man swept away in the river, shouting, Help! Now what he needs, maybe, is a life belt. And what the man falling off the cliff, maybe needs, is a rope or a safety net at the bottom, perhaps.

What each of us need is different, depending on our problem. But in the Lord, is the help of whatever you may be needing, whatever may be your particular situation or problem or heartbreak, the Lord is able to deal with it.

The Lord is able to take that problem, that issue, that difficulty, and lift the burden from you. He won't magically make it go away, but he will enable you somehow to be brought through it, to be brought over these obstacles, to have passed through these difficulties.

Haven't you? Had situations, where there's been something up ahead of you, maybe a whole series of things, and you've been absolutely dreading it, and thinking, How am I going to get through this thing?

How am I going to get, there's this, and there's that, and there's the next thing. And it's just, it's just a nightmare, a logistical nightmare. How are we going to get through this, this, and this? How are we going to cope with it?

[10 : 02] How are we going to pay for it, if it's a big, expensive problem? And then, before you know it, as you turn it over to the Lord, and ask for his help, within a matter of, it may be days, it may be weeks, it may be months.

But you'll wake up one day, you turn and think, remember all that, I was so worried, it's hard to believe, it's all past, it's all done with. And here I am, on the other side of it, and still okay.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and the wonder, and the understanding, that through it all, he brought it us. And we still might not understand, how we managed to get through, or how we managed to cope, or how we did it.

And the point will be, you didn't, I didn't, but the Lord did. If you turn your life over to the Lord, it is not burden, it is not pressure, it is the lifting of pressure.

It is the easing of the burden, it is the taking of the responsibility, by God, which you and I, were never designed to carry, were never designed to bear, to take up our cross, yes, and follow Jesus, we are to do that.

[11 : 18] But the person, who carried their cross, normally got nailed onto it, at the end of their journey. But we don't. We lay down, our cross at the last, and Christ, is the one, who has put to death, upon it.

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself. None of us can turn round, and say to God, Lord, it is your fault, you did this to me, you made this happen, you let this happen, you did this to me, you did that to me, you're the problem, you're at fault, because all these problems I've got, it's your doing, Lord.

There may be times, when we may complain to the Lord, and we may think that God, in his providence, has visited us, in a certain way, that we don't understand, and we can't understand, why this visitation may be coming to us, and why the Lord, has allowed these things to happen, but that's a different thing, from saying it's God's fault, that would be like, the Israelites complaining, and he'd say, why are we getting all these plagues, my goodness, these locusts, and then this darkness, and then the plague, on the cattle, and so on, it's just one thing after another, my goodness, what a pain, but why is God doing it, God is doing it, not to grind them down, but to grind down their enemies, and to deliver them, out of bondage, why is God, sending a particular issue, a particular problem, it will not be, to grind you down, but rather, to enable you, to be brought through it, and something else, to be dealt with, or something else, to be identified, so it could be dealt with, thou hast destroyed thyself, we cannot say, it's God's fault, that I'm destroyed, have we, not been the ones, who make the choices, who take the decisions, that take our lives, down certain avenues, and that end up, with the problems that we have, and the difficulties, or the pain, some things, yes, are beyond our control, some things, we may say, well I'm not responsible, for that,

I didn't actually, do that one, and so Lord, what's your answer to that, well, what's your question, to God, you bring your question, to God, you bring your burden, to the Lord, you lay it down, at the Lord's feet, and you let him, carry that burden, which is too heavy, for you, which is, too much of a weight, that you were never, intended to bear, man, was never intended, to go through, this fallen world, this veil of tears, without God, that is man's choice, that is Israel's choice, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed, thyself, and to walk, through this veil of tears, without God, is to be ground down, it is to feel, our steps, ever heavier, the weight, ever heavier, upon our back, the burden, of decay, and difficulty, and disease, and illness, as we age, and as we face, one problem, after another, and as those, we have known, move away, or die, or we lose contact, it becomes, darker, and lonelier, and more difficult, friend, you were never, meant, to walk, this world, without God, you were never, meant, to be, without him, you and I, are designed, to be in relationship, and in fellowship, with the Lord, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed, thyself, it is a direct, speaking, to, the Lord's people, thou hast destroyed, thyself, what have you done, why have you done this, but in me, is thine help, not in you, not in your false gods, not in the world, not in you just, try a little bit harder, and do a little bit more, and just face the world, with a smile, and buck your ideas up, you don't have the strength, to do that, you don't have the resources, you don't have the means, to turn the clock, back 25 years, and become young again, and do it differently, you and I, don't have that means, you were never intended, to walk this road alone, and if we do so, it has been our choice, to do so, if we have left the Lord, out of our lives, it has been our choice, to do so, and as the Americans, might put it in their, choice phrase, that says so much, how's that working out, for you, which really means, you know, what a disaster, you've got, how's that working out, for you, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed, thyself, that's how it's working out, for you, without the Lord, but in me, is thine help, says the Lord, in me, is thine help, see, scripture is replete, with examples, of both, those who have done, what they should do, and those who have done, what they shouldn't, now let's look at, some that do, what they should, second chronicles, in chapter 20, in verse 4, in the reign of Jehoshaphat, all the Ammonites, and the Moabites, were coming against Judah, and they didn't have the strength, to fight them back, so we read, that Jehoshaphat, feared, and set himself, to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast, throughout all Judah, and Judah, gathered themselves, together, to ask, help, of the Lord, even out of all, the cities of Judah, they came, to seek, the Lord, they asked help, of the Lord, now, of course, in the living memory, of some, still, you know, we can still, but some, can still remember, the last war, a long time ago now, but, in those days, just to show, how different, our country is, in those days, when we were, under pressure, from the enemy, when we were, losing every battle, when our troops, were having to be, evacuated, from Dunkirk, what did our nation do,

well, our king, called, for a national, day of prayer, across the entire nation, and people's work, was closed out, in the church doors, were thrown open, and people, went to the churches, and prayed, and what happened, well, Dunkirk, is still described, as often, the miracle, of Dunkirk, how, when they thought, they might only, get a couple, of thousand men out, they got, 300,000, out, they got, the bulk, of the army, that was left, the tanks, that should have, cut them off, stopped, suddenly, inexplicably, and people, say, oh yeah, well that's, because they had, to refuel, they had to be, remaintenance, and so on, yeah, but if they, had pressed on, they would have, cut off, any hope, of evacuation, why, did they, or, just, so, happen, to stop, on an entire, nation, went on, its knees, in prayer, oh yeah, just coincidence, the world would say, sure, right, nowadays, could you see, our nation, calling, for a day of prayer, no, they'd be afraid, of offending, this religion, or that religion, or the atheists, or the humanists, no, they would never dare, to do that, and upset some people, but when we, turn our backs, on the Lord, we reap, the kind of result, that our nation, is so often, exposed to, now, and I don't necessarily, mean, foreign enemies, we only have to look within, to see the train wreck, that our country, has become, in social times, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed, thyself, but in me, is nothing help,

[19 : 03] Jehoshaphat, and the people of Judah, went to the Lord, for help, and nowhere, is this, crying out, to the Lord, for help, more visibly, demonstrated, within the sands, David, a man who walked with God, a man after God's own heart, and we find in, Psalm after Psalm, him crying out, for help, and seeking the Lord's help, Psalm 12, verse 1, help Lord, for the godly man sees it, for the faithful fail, from among the children of men, David, needs the Lord's strength, Psalm 27, verse 10, when my father, and my mother, forsake me, then the Lord, will take me up, hide not thy face, far from me, verse 9, put not thy servant, away in anger, thou hast been, my help, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God, of my salvation, God has been, our help in the past, and he will be again, Psalm 33, verse 20, our soul, waiteth for the Lord, he is our help, and shield, so it goes on,

Psalm 46, as we all know, verse 1, this famous Psalm, God is our refuge, and strength, a very present, help, in trouble, therefore, will not we fear, though the earth, be removed, though the mountains, be carried into the midst, of the sea, though the waters, thereof, road and be troubled, though the mountains, shake with the swelling, thereof, say that, in other words, if God is in charge, you don't have to worry, about what is going to happen, I'm sure we've all, been on the ferry, at times, when it's been very stormy, and maybe it's been, going about all over the place, somewhere thinking, oh this is a bit iffy, but I don't imagine, you think, I wonder if the people, on the bridge, actually know what they're doing, maybe I should go up, and help them, if I can, no, we leave it, and we know that the captain, and the officers, and the sailors, they know exactly, what they're doing, far better than we do, so we are confident, it is in their hands, and so when the earth shakes, and the moves, and the swelling they are, and the mountains be carried, into the midst of the sea, yes it's a bit scary, but God is in charge, if the Lord, is the Lord of your life, you don't have to be afraid,

Psalm 63, verse 7, because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings, will I rejoice, my soul, followeth hard after thee, thy right hand, upholdeth me, and of course, famously in Psalm 1, 2, 1, verses 1 and 2, I will lift up mine eyes, unto the hills, from whence cometh my help, my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth, God who created, all the heavens and the earth, he has that power, at his fingertips, think about that, for a moment, we think in Psalm 1, 2, 4, verse 8, our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth, think of the vastness, of the universe, think of how great, and big the sun is, in comparison to the earth, and the other planets, our solar system, think of how the sun, is only a tiny little pin brick, compared to some of the suns, and stars, and planets, that are out there, and the Lord created them, each one, he set them, in their places, you know, way back in the book of Job, arguably the earliest book, of the Bible, and it says there, in Job, you know, he hangeth the earth, upon nothing, and might think, okay, it's because of gravity, or orbits, or whatever, the earth stays spinning, on its axis, what keeps the sun in place, what stops it plummeting, why don't all the other, planets and stars, why don't they just fall, and keep falling, and just plummet, through the, through the blackness, oh they stay, where they are, what keeps them all, just held up there, in space, he hangeth the earth, upon nothing, this is the God, who has such, power, at his, fingertips, who has created, the microscopic, little cells, that inhabit each body, that multiply, and do all the things, that they do, how you can grow, stem cells, and they can be programmed, to take over, some of the jobs, and tasks, in your body, or in your, in whatever they need to do, these have all been, infinitesimally designed, the God, who has such knowledge, at his fingertips, such power, in his arm, this is the God, who loves you, this is the God, who created you, this is the God, who says, look unto me, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me, is thine help, now whatever, the help is, that we need,

God is able, to provide it, whatever the shortages, we have, God has abundance, and more, to deal with them, the ultimate help, you could argue, that all of us, will need at the last, is as we face, the uncertainty of death, well, the certainty of death, but the uncertainty, that we face, in not knowing, what is ahead of it, it is the last great unknown, and yet we read here, in verse 14, of Hosea 13, I will ransom them, from the power, of the grave, I will redeem them, from death, oh death, I will be thy place, oh grave, I will be thy destruction, repentance, shall be hid from mine eyes, in other words, I won't change my mind, and of course, this is exactly, what Paul, cites in, 1 Corinthians 15, there towards, the end of the chapter, verse 55, or thereabouts, you know, he says, oh death, where is thy sting, oh grave, where is thy victory, because God, has overcome, these things, it doesn't mean, that they won't happen, but it means, they won't have, power over us,

God does not, take us by the hand, and say, see that problem, up ahead, you won't have to face it, I know a shortcut, I know a way around, so that you, won't have to deal with it, so that you can just, avoid it, it's like, taking a little child, who's a little bit nervous, and blubbery, at the school gates, and say, listen, I've got a good idea, let's just go to the park, instead, you won't have to go to school, you won't have to sit in class, you won't have to face that teacher, you're scared of, you won't have to learn, all those nasty subjects, you don't want to deal with school, let's just go, and have fun on the swings, instead, nobody who loves you, is going to do that, they're going to say, look it's okay, you go to school, the teachers are there, to help you, you have your lunch, other people in the class, they're just as scared, and nervous as you, you'll get through it, see the child, at the end of the day, how was your, oh it was fine, thanks, no, and they get through, but love, enables you, to get through, it enables you, to be brought, through that difficulty, and out the other side, where there will be joy, so God doesn't say, a grave, don't worry about it,

[26 : 21] I'm going to find a way, of avoiding that, no, you will go through it, but what does he say, he says, he himself, goes through it first, Jesus dies, and goes down, into the grave, Jesus comes back again, from the dead, and says, there's nothing, to be afraid of, I've been there, I've been through it, I've taken the power, but yes, you pass through that door, but that's all it is, for those who are in Christ, it's a doorway, to true life, in all its fullness, the one thing, that you may be, ultimately afraid of, the one problem, with which you think, nobody can help you, that's not true, God can help, God desires to help, that is why, he came, in the person, of his son, Jesus Christ, oh Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me, is thine help, oh death, I will be thy plagues, oh grave, I will be thy destruction, not going to change my mind, now it may not be, the big ultimate, problem of darkness, and death, that you're worried about, it may be far, lesser things, although they are, big enough problems, to you, they will be, big individual difficulties, that you are worried about, maybe you're embarrassed about, and you don't know, who you can tell, and you don't know, who you can talk to, friend, you can talk to the Lord, and you can go to him, because, you were never intended, or designed, to bear this burden alone, you were never intended, or designed, to walk this path, alone, that is not, what God, created, man for, he created, man for, relationship, with himself, and he illustrated, that relationship, by saying, it wasn't good, for man to be alone, let us make man, in our image, so that there will be, companionship, whether in marriage, or whether with family members, or friends, or whatever, that there will be, companionship, amongst humanity, but ultimately, there will be, companionship, and sonship, with God, the Lord, promises, to heal us,

Isaiah, chapter 65, we read this lovely, verse 24, it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear, and we have an illustration, of that in Daniel, of course, in chapter 9, as you may recollect, where he's praying, and pouring out his soul, to the Lord, and then angel Gabriel, comes to him, and informed me, and talked with me, and said, oh Daniel, I am now come forth, to give thee skill, and understanding, at the beginning, of thy supplications, and this is a big, long prayer, Daniel's been making, says as soon as you began to speak, at the beginning, of thy supplications, you know, and the commandment, came forth, and I am come, to show thee, for thou, art greatly beloved, therefore, understand the matter, and consider the vision, before they call, I will answer, whilst they are yet speaking, I will hear, before the thought, is formed in your mind, that is articulated, in words, for your prayer,

God already knows, what is in your heart, God is already, prepared, to answer, in God, there is strength, there is health, there is resources, there is all the means, that you could possibly, require, to help, with whatever, the obstacles, problems, and difficulties, of life will be, and there will be, many, and you will need him, every day, of your life, why, in the world, would anyone, choose, to go through this world, without the Lord, why, in the name, of God, if we may say it, with all reverence, would anyone, choose, to leave, this world, without God, you were never, designed, for that, we have made, a mess of this life, we have made, a mess of this world, nothing has changed, in all these, thousands of years, oh Israel, thou hast, destroyed thyself, but in me, is thine help, and the Lord,

Jehovah, is everlasting strength, help, grace, and mercy, look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else, our help, is in the name of the Lord, and the heaven and earth, and the spirit.