

ARAMAIC BIBLE COMPANION HOSEA PROPHET OF COVENANT LOVE

Were we to choose a hymn suited to the message of this prophet the praise "A Debtor to mercy alone" by Augustus Montague Toplady would be very appropriate. You see, over and over this compassionate man who went the second mile leaned on the very mercy he demonstrated to others. Hosea constantly spoke of "Prophets" as persons who reflect God's love. He interchanges the love of God with the loving care taken of the people of God in one instance by Moses- cf Chapter

The book abounds in references to "**Covenant Mercy**". I have found seventeen(17) instances of God speaking of his covenant mercy and love through the prophet and a handful of most touching references to the desire of God in all faithfulness to hold on to his people Israel. One of these sets Jacob fleeing from Aram with his wife to whom he held and who held fast to him-sets him alongside Hosea-and they both cast into relief the deep faithfulness of God. Another is the **faithfulness** to His son that God shows at the exodus-caring for him through Moses-and teaching him to walk -bowing down to prevent Israel stumbling. These two themes are the foci of this merciful book.

The Prophecy also contains stark reminders of Israel's sin and of Judah's nomad-like relationship with Yahweh. The sins of a time of plenty are set forth in all their lurid and ghastly callousness. The people "love stretching themselves out" in prostitution; they maintain their gain is all worthy and the fruit of toil though they love to use deceiving weights. In the light of the deep-dyed sin of Israel -reflected in the unfaithfulness of Gomer God's grace is the more glorious.

A debtor to mercy alone, of **covenant mercy** I sing;
Nor fear with Thy righteousness on, my person and offering to bring.
The terrors of law and of God with me can have nothing to do;
My Saviour's obedience and blood hid all my transgressing from view.

The work which His goodness began, the arm of His strength will compete;
His promise is Yea and Amen, and never was forfeited yet.
Things future nor things that are now, nor all things below or above,
Can make Him His purpose forgo or sever my soul from His love.

My name from the palms of His hands eternity will not erase;
Impressed on His heart it remains, in marks of **indelible grace**.
Yes I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heaven.

Augustus Montague Toplady

Bob Coffey L'shuvkha Marya
To the glory of the Lord
Aramaic Bible Companion