

# Hosea's Family: Symbols of the Lord for Ancient Israel

Hosea was a prophet of the northern kingdom who ministered and prophesied a few years before the kingdom was taken captive by the Assyrians (721 BC). The northern kingdom is also referred to as the ten tribes of Israel. The prophet Hosea lived during a period when the house of Israel was committing grievous transgressions, including worshipping false deities. The lord called His people to repentance by using a number of symbols or similitudes (Hosea 12:10). These similitudes included Hosea and his wife Gomer, his daughter Loruhamah, and his two sons Jezreel and Lomami. This family of five became living symbols

unto the house of Israel. Hosea represented the lord Himself. Gomer, “a wife of whoredoms,” signified Israel’s infidelity, and each of their three children symbolized an additional aspect of Israel’s relationship with God.

The chart sets forth the Hebrew names of each of the five family members (column 1), the English meaning of the names (column 2), and the symbolic value of each of the family members (column 3). Note how the lord, through Hosea, employed special wordplays with the three children’s names to teach us about His relationship with the house of Israel.

Name	Meaning	Symbolism
<b>Hosea</b>	Salvation	God commanded Hosea to marry Gomer, “a wife of whoredoms” (Hosea 1:2). Hosea symbolized the lord, the bridegroom (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 31:32) of the covenant people Israel, who were committing spiritual adultery by worshipping other gods. Both Hosea and the lord are called “Salvation” (Isa. 12:2).
<b>Gomer</b>	Completion?	Gomer, Hosea’s “wife of whoredoms,” represented unfaithful Israel, who had “committed great whoredom” by “departing from the lord” (Hosea 1:2).
<b>Jezreel, first son</b>	God will sow	Hosea and Gomer’s first son is so named because the lord stated, “I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel” (Hosea 1:5). The bow, representing Israel’s military might, was broken in Jezreel when the Assyrians seized this valley. Years later, Israel fell and God scattered His people abroad, much like a farmer sows or scatters seed onto the soil.

Name	Meaning	Symbolism
<b>Lo-ruhamah, daughter</b>	No mercy	Hosea and Gomer’s daughter was named “No mercy” because the lord declared that He would “no more have mercy upon the house of Israel” (Hosea 1:6) due to its people’s many transgressions. Lo-ruhamah, then, symbolized the lord’s removal of mercy from His bride, the covenant people of Israel.
<b>Lo-ammi, second son</b>	Not my people	Hosea and Gomer’s second son was named “Not my people” because the lord declared to Israel, “Ye are not my people, and I will not be your God” (Hosea 1:2–9). Lo-ammi, then, symbolized the broken covenant relationship between the lord and Israel, caused by Israel’s wickedness.