

Who was King Shallum in the Bible?

Shallum was a king of Israel for one brief month in 752 BC. He rose to the throne wickedly, and he filled his one month on the throne with wickedness.

Shallum became king of the northern kingdom of Israel after he assassinated the reigning king, Zechariah, and took his throne (2 Kings 15:8-10). All we know of Shallum's personal history is that he was "the son of Jabesh" (2 Kings 15:10).

Shallum assassinated King Zechariah in public: "Shallum . . . conspired against Zechariah. He attacked him in front of the people, assassinated him and succeeded him as king" (2 Kings 15:10). By killing the king "in front of the people," Shallum must have possessed a great deal of confidence that his action would be rewarded, not punished.

King Zechariah, whom Shallum assassinated, had only reigned six months himself. Zechariah had done evil in God's sight as many other kings had done. Shallum's murder of Zechariah was a fulfillment of God's prophecy spoken to Jehu: "Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation" (2 Kings 15:12; cf. 10:30). That blessing of God had been a reward for Jehu's wiping out the house of Ahab and killing the prophets of Baal in Israel. With the death of Zechariah, God's promise was completed. The last of Jehu's descendants had had his time on the throne. Shallum's actions brought an end to Jehu's dynasty and remind us that God can use the evil actions of evil people to accomplish what He has planned (see Isaiah 46:9-11; Genesis 50:20).

As Jesus said, "All who draw the sword will die by the sword" (Matthew 26:52), and Shallum's fate came quickly. After one month as king, Shallum was also assassinated. A man named Menahem killed Shallum and ruled Israel for the next ten years (2 Kings

15:14). The story of Shallum ends with a historical footnote: “The other events of Shallum’s reign, and the conspiracy he led, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel” (2 Kings 15:15).