

Concerning Shallum, Otherwise Known as King Jehoahaz Jeremiah 22:10-12 and Second Kings 23:31-33

DIG: Why is King Shallum, also called Jehoahaz, to be pitied more than his father, Josiah? What happened to Jehoahaz (Second Kings 23:34) in 609 BC? Why do you suppose there were so many wicked kings during this period in biblical history? How would this have affected Jeremiah's ministry? His sense of purpose? His hope?

REFLECT: What are you doing with the brief time the LORD has given you to minister in this life? What is (are) your spiritual gift (gifts)? Are you using it (them)? Are there any sins prevalent in your family that you might be tempted to emulate? How can they be avoided? What would be the cost to you if you got involved with them?

609 BC during the three-month reign of Jehoahaz

Jehoahaz (Hebrew: *ADONAI will help*) was twenty-three years old when he became king, but he reigned in Jerusalem for only three months. Shallum was his personal name, and Jehoahaz was his throne name. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah (not Jeremiah from Anathoth since he was not permitted by God to marry in 16:2); she was from Libnah. In the brief time he ruled he did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his predecessors had done. Judah fell under Egyptian control. Pharaoh Necho summoned the newly appointed king to Riblah in the land of Hamath and put him in chains and took him to Egypt so that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and he imposed a heavy tax on Judah of a hundred talents (three and three-quarter tons) of silver and a talent (seventy-five pounds) of gold (Second Kings 23:31-33).

When King Josiah died it was particularly traumatic for Y'hudah, for it brought an end to dreams regarding freedom from foreign domination and the reunification of the people from the northern kingdom of Isra'el (see Ai - Josiah Ruled for 31 Years from 640 to 609 BC). Instead, the people were to mourn for Jehoahaz. Jeremiah said: Do not weep for the dead king Josiah or grieve his loss; rather, weep bitterly for Shallum who is exiled in Egypt. This king, chosen by the people, would never return (*shuwb*) nor see his native land again (22:10). The people were to lament for him because his passing was a sign of shattered hopes for the future of Y'hudah.

Then in more precise terms the LORD said: **Shallum son of Josiah** (see Bm - **Jehoahaz Ruled For 3 Months in 609 BC**), who succeeded his father as king of Judah has gone from this place and he will never return (**shuw**). He will die in Egypt where they have led him captive; he will never see his homeland again (**Second Kings 23:34; Second Chronicles 36:14**), and he died in captivity at an unknown date (**22:11-12**).

This stresses the dread and finality of exile. **The king himself** is of little use. **He** is a sign of the failure and the judgment of the monarchy. The kings of **Jerusalem**, of which **Jehoahaz**, or **Shallum**, is a sorry case in point, are unable to cope with the demands of a holy **God**. Monarchy was no barrier against the LORD's ultimate destruction of **Yerushalayim**. The fate of this king foreshadowed that of the people. The call of **Jeremiah 22:10** not to mourn the death of **Josiah** is intended only to call attention to the sad fate of **Jehoahaz**. According to **Second Chronicles 35:25**, **Yirmeyahu** offered a lamentation for **Josiah**, which became a pattern for singers in **Isra'el**.¹⁰⁸