

The Lord God prepared a plant [for] shade . . . [and] a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.

Jonah 4:6-7

The story of the rebellious prophet Jonah shows us how God desires to use both blessings and trials to challenge us and change us for the better. Five times in the book of Jonah it says that the Lord prepared circumstances for him—both good and bad.

In Jonah 1:4 we read that the Lord sent a storm. It says He “sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea.” After the mariners discovered that Jonah was the reason for this storm, they threw him overboard (1:15). Then God “prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah” to save him from drowning (1:17).

Later in the book we read that “the Lord God prepared a plant” to shade Jonah (4:6). Then we see that God prepared a worm to kill the vine as well as a scorching wind and sun to beat down upon him (4:7-9). These circumstances were used to reveal Jonah’s rebellious attitude. Only after that revelation could God directly confront Jonah’s heart problem.

As we face different situations, we should remember that God is sovereign over both the blessings and the troubles that come our way. He desires to use everything to build our character (James 1:1-5). He uses both good and bad to transform us and guide us on our journey.

The Maker of the universe

Knows every need of man,

And made provision for that need

According to His plan. —Crane **The Lord gives and takes away. Blessed be the Lord.**