

# Jonah 4:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.

## Analysis

**And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.** The third "prepared" thing—vayehi kizroach hashamesh vayeman Elohim ruach qadim charishit vattak hashamesh al-rosh Yonah vayit'allaf vayish'al et-nafsho lamut. The "vehement east wind" (ruach qadim charishit, רוּחַ קָדִים חֲרִישִׁית) describes scorching sirocco winds from Arabian desert—hot, dry, oppressive. Combined with direct sun "beating" (nakah, same verb as worm "smote"), Jonah suffers intensely.

"He fainted" (yit'allaf, יִתְעַלֵּף) means to cover oneself, faint, or grow weak—possibly heat stroke. Once again, Jonah "wished to die" (same phrase as 4:3)—his second death wish in the chapter. The repetition "it is better for me to die than to live" echoes verse 3 verbatim, showing Jonah has learned nothing. God provided the fish, the plant, now discomfort—all to teach, yet Jonah remains unteachable. His melodramatic death wish over lost shade contrasts his silence over 120,000 souls.

This verse demonstrates that external circumstances don't change internal attitudes—only God's grace does. Jonah experienced miraculous deliverance (fish), successful ministry (Nineveh repented), divine provision (plant), yet remains miserable because his heart is wrong. The gospel teaches that true transformation requires new birth (John 3:3), new heart (Ezekiel 36:26), Spirit's indwelling

(Romans 8:9)—not merely better circumstances. Jonah had right theology (4:2) but wrong affections. Knowledge without love produces pride (1 Corinthians 8:1).

## Historical Context

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The east wind (qadim) from Arabian desert brought scorching heat to Mesopotamia. Sirocco winds could exceed 110°F (43°C) with extremely low humidity, creating dangerous conditions. Hosea 13:15 uses east wind as metaphor for Assyrian invasion. Jonah's physical suffering mirrors his spiritual state—both reflect being under divine discipline. Ancient Near Eastern literature frequently connected environmental conditions with divine mood or judgment. The combination of sun and wind intensified Jonah's misery, creating teachable moment—though Jonah proves resistant student.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

## Study Questions

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1. How does Jonah's repeated death wish reveal that changed circumstances don't produce changed hearts—only God's grace does?
2. What does Jonah's melodrama over lost shade versus silence over saved souls expose about human self-centeredness?
3. In what ways can we have correct theology yet wrong affections, and how does the gospel address this disconnect?

## Interlinear Text

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וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961	כָּזָרָה H2224	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H1961
did arise	And it came to pass when the sun	prepared	that God	wind		
H2224	H8121	H4487	H430	H7307		
וַיָּהּ יוֹ H6921	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2759	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H5221	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H8121	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H5921	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H7218	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H7218
east	a vehement	beat	And it came to pass when the sun	upon the head		
H6921	H2759	H5221	H8121	H5921	H7218	H7218
וַיָּהּ יוֹ H3124	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H5968	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H7592	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H853	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H5315	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H4191	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H559
of Jonah	that he fainted	and wished	in himself	to die	and said	
H3124	H5968	H7592	H5315	H4191	H559	
וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2896	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H4194	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2416	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2416	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2416	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2416	וַיָּהּ יוֹ H2416
It is better	for me to die	than to live				
H2896	H4194	H2416				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Psalms 121:6** (Parallel theme): The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.

**Jonah 4:3** (Parallel theme): Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live.

**Revelation 3:19** (Parallel theme): As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

**Isaiah 49:10** (Parallel theme): They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

**Ezekiel 19:12** (Parallel theme): But she was plucked up in fury, she was cast down to the ground, and the east wind dried up her fruit: her strong rods were broken and withered; the fire consumed them.