

~BOTTLE-GOURD PLANT (81)

[Hebrew, *qi-qa-yohn'*]

- The **Hebrew** term represents the plant that Yehowah caused to grow miraculously overnight to provide shade for the prophet Jonah as he sat in a booth awaiting the results of his prophesying against Nineveh.
- The plant brought great relief to Jonah until Yehowah caused a worm to attack it, resulting in its withering. The prophet was thereby left exposed to the beating rays of the sun.
- Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and gradually he made for himself there a booth, that he might sit under it in the shade until he would see what would become of the city. (**Jonah 4:5**)
- Accordingly Yehowah God appointed a **bottle-gourd plant**, that it should come up over Jonah, in order to become a shade over his head, to deliver him from his calamitous state. And Jonah began to rejoice greatly over the **bottle-gourd plant**. (**Jonah 4:6**)
- But the true God appointed a worm at the ascending of the dawn on the next day, that it should strike the **bottle-gourd plant**, and it gradually dried up. (**Jonah 4:7**)
- And it came about that, as soon as the sun shone forth, God also went on to appoint a parching east wind, and the sun kept striking upon the head of Jonah, so that he was swooning away, and he kept asking that his soul might die, and he repeatedly said; My dying off is better than my being alive. (**Jonah 4:8**)
- And God proceeded to say to Jonah; Have you rightly become hot with anger over the **bottle-gourd plant**? At that he said; I have rightly become hot with anger, to the point of death. (**Jonah 4:9**)
- But Yehowah said; You, for your part, felt sorry for the **bottle-gourd plant**, which you did not toil upon or make get big, which proved to be a mere growth of a night and perished as a mere growth of a night. (**Jonah 4:10**)

- And, for my part, ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who do not at all know the difference between their right hand and their left, besides many domestic animals? (**Jonah 4:11**)
- Two plants are commonly suggested as possible translations of the Hebrew *qi-qa-yohn'*. Some Bible translations **RS,JB**, prefer the **castor-oil plant**, *Ricinus communis*, a perennial plant of rapid growth attaining a height of 3 meters (10 feet) or more, and having large leaves.
- This preference is based on a suggestion made by Jerome that *qi-qa-yohn'* might be the **castor-oil tree**, as well as on the similarity between the **Hebrew** word and the Egyptian *kiki*.
- Other scholars and translators suggest the **gourd AT** or **bottle-gourd plant NW**. A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (by Brown, Driver, and Briggs, 1980, p. 884) suggests the meaning **bottle-gourd**, a broad-leafed plant classified botanically as *Cucurbita lagenaria*.
- The **bottle-gourd plant** develops rapidly. Regarding this plant, Dictionnaire Deuteronomy [Lamentations Bible (Vol. 5, col. 1098] states; It is known that the gourd plant grows very rapidly in hot countries and that it is used for covering with verdure the walls of houses and shelters where it clings like the Virginia creeper, providing a protection against the heat by means of its entwinings and its large leaves.
- In the symbolic paintings based on the story of Jonah found in the catacombs, it is always this plant that is portrayed. [Edited by F. Vigouroux, Paris, 1912] So a **gourd plant** that normally grows rapidly was miraculously caused to grow up in one night by Yehowah's power in order to shield Jonah from the hot rays of the sun.