N.E.W. SEMINARY SERMON RESOURCES

The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish

Pastor Hoon Kim, 18 October 2026, Jonah 1:17-2:10

Pastor Hoon Kim explores Jonah's prayer from the belly of the great fish, revealing how God sovereignly prepares seasons of distress as a womb for the death of the self. Grounded in covenant relationship, true prayer invites believers to cry out to 'my God' with full confidence that the Lord hears and responds to who we are.

Teaching by Pastor Hoon Kim, N.E.W. Church. Translated from Korean with the help of AI. Shared on 15 November 2026, before its full review.

Free to listen, download, and share: newexodusseminary.org/en/2026-10-19-new-jonah-1-the-prayer-in-the-belly-of/

At a glance · Teaching notes · Scripture guide · Word studies · Places and timeline · Teaching outline · Study guide · Prayer · Review quiz · In three minutes · A week of WhatsApp messages

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Visuals

- Visual 1: The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish
- Visual 2: God Prepared the Fish
- Visual 3: Three Days and Three Nights
- Visual 4: Praying to His God

At a glance

- **Title (Korean):** 요나의 기도와 보혈의 능력
- **Title (English):** The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish (suggested: A Poem in the Margins: Prayer in the Womb of Grace)
- **Date:** October 19, 2026
- **Main Passage:** Jonah 1:17–2:10
- **Preacher:** Pastor Hoon Kim (N.E.W. Church)

Core Truth

God sovereignly prepares times and places of distress, like the belly of the fish, not to destroy us, but as a womb where our old self dies and we discover the royal privilege of crying out to our personal God who responds to who we are.

Summary

In Jonah 1:17–2:10, Jonah offers a poetic prayer from the deep confines of a great fish, illustrating what poet Kim Yong-taek termed the "aesthetics of white space", where unspoken realities speak louder than visible words. God sovereignly prepared the fish not merely as a rescue vessel, but as a womb of rebirth where the old self undergoes symbolic death over three days and three nights, mirroring Israel at Mount Sinai and Abraham at Mount Moriah. Jonah's prayer models the covenant privilege of Israel, where prayer is grounded in a personal relationship ("the Lord his God") rather than ritualistic manipulation. Even when our prayers sound like the babbling of an infant, God hears, knows our needs beforehand, and responds primarily to our very being and identity in Christ.

Main Movements

1. **A Poem of Margins: The Prayer in the Fish's Belly** (Introductory aesthetics of Old Testament prophetic poetry and the profound margins of Jonah's prayer)
2. **The Special Environment God Prepared** (God's sovereign provision of the fish as a womb of meeting in the storm)
3. **Three Days and Three Nights: The Death of the Self and Being Born Anew** (The biblical pattern of transformation and spiritual death seen in Exodus, Abraham, and Jonah)
4. **A Cry Grounded in Relationship and the Assurance of an Answer** (Calling on "my God" with assurance that God responds to our being before our words)

Teaching notes

Historical Background

- **Prophetic Literature as Art:** Jonah is both sacred Scripture and sophisticated Hebrew literature. It uses dramatic irony, structural symmetry, and poetic prayer to reveal spiritual realities.

- **Exemplary Israelite Prayer:** Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 is structured almost entirely out of phrases from the Psalms (e.g., Ps 18, 30, 42, 116, 120). Jonah acts as an exemplary Israelite who, despite his rebellion, knows the canonical liturgical language of prayer and utilizes the covenant privileges granted to Israel [Jonah 2:1–9].

Places and Geography

- **Mount Moriah / Mount Zion:** Abraham's three-day journey from Beersheba to Mount Moriah (Gen 22) is noted. Pastor Kim identifies Moriah with Mount Zion in Jerusalem, highlighting it as the place where self-will was surrendered through the binding of Isaac.
- **Mount Sinai / Desert Wilderness:** The wilderness journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai (Exod 19) is presented as the testing ground where Israel was stripped of slave mentality to receive the revelation of their identity as God's treasured possession (*segullah*).
- **The Heart of the Seas / Sheol:** The geographic depths into which Jonah plunged represent the abyss, the roots of the mountains, and Sheol, the realm of death outside human reach [Jonah 2:2–6].

Original-Language Insights

- **God Prepared / Appointed (*Manah* - מָנָה):** In Jonah 1:17 (and later in Jonah 4:6, 7, 8), God "prepares" or "appoints" specific agents. God is sovereign over creation, ordaining storms, fish, plants, and worms to direct His servants.
- **Masculine to Feminine Fish (*Dag* / *Dagah* - דָּג / דָּגָה):** In Jonah 1:17a, the fish is masculine (*dag gadol*), while in Jonah 1:17b / 2:1 it appears in the feminine form (*dagah*). Pastor Kim notes the rabbinic/commentary insight that this shift, paired with the Hebrew word for internal organs/belly (*me'im* / מֵעִים), suggests the function of a womb (*rechem*), making the fish an environment for gestation and new birth rather than merely a tomb.
- **Treasured Possession (*Segullah* - סְגֻלָּה):** Used in Exodus 19:5. The transition through the three-day wilderness experience brought Israel into the revelation of being God's prized personal property.
- **The Lord His God (*Yahweh Elohayw* - יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו):** In Jonah 2:1, Jonah prays to "Yahweh his God." True prayer rests upon personal, covenant relationship rather than generic theism.

Spiritual Truths and Applications

- **The Aesthetics of White Space (*Yeobaek-ui Mihak*):** Using Kim Yong-taek's poem *The Moon*, Pastor Kim illustrates that the unspoken context, the relational bond between two lovers, gives power to simple words. Similarly, the unspoken background in Jonah's prayer is God's enduring covenant love framing Jonah's desperate cry.
- **The Belly of the Fish as a Prepared Sanctuary:** Hardships, shipwrecks, and depths are not accidents; God prepares specific environments (prayer mountains, early mornings, crisis points) where we are forced to stop running and meet Him.
- **The "Three Days and Three Nights" Principle of Spiritual Death:**
- True transformation requires the death of the self.
- Seen in Israel's transition from slavery to sonship (Exodus).
- Seen in Abraham's surrender of his dearest promise, Isaac (Genesis 22).
- Seen in Jesus' death and resurrection (the sign of Jonah, Matthew 12).
- The fish's belly is where our pride, stubborn opinions, and old nature are dissolved so that we can be birthed anew.
- **The Relational Baseline of Prayer:**
- Prayer is distinct from worldly or pagan petitions because it is based on knowing God personally.
- The tragedy of atheism is experiencing awe and deep gratitude without having an object or person to thank.
- Jonah had someone to call upon: "My God."
- **God Responds to Our Being, Not Just Our Babble:**
- Like a mother who interprets her infant's inarticulate cries, God looks past our clumsy or misguided petitions to address our core identity and true needs.
- God's answer is an answer to *us* as His children, not merely a mechanical reply to the words spoken.

Scripture guide

Scripture Usage Table

Reference	How used	Where	What Pastor Kim drew from it	Confidence
Jonah 1:17	Read & Expounded	God Prepared Environment; Death of Self	God sovereignly prepared (*manah*) a great fish. The fish shifts grammatically to suggest a womb; three days and nights signify transformation.	High
Jonah 2:1	Read & Expounded	Relationship & Assurance	Jonah prayed to "the Lord his God." Prayer begins with a covenantal, personal relationship, not distant knowledge.	High
Jonah 2:2	Read & Expounded	Relationship & Assurance	In distress Jonah cried out from Sheol, and God answered. Suffering is the designated time to seek God, who responds to our being.	High
Jonah 2:3–9	Read	A Poem of Margins	Read responsively during the sermon text reading; sets the poetic psalm-like language of distress and deliverance.	High
Jonah 2:10	Read & Alluded to	God Prepared Environment; Death of Self	The fish vomited Jonah onto dry land; pictures emerging into new life after the death of the old self.	High
Jonah 4:6–8	Alluded to	God Prepared Environment	In chapter 4, God similarly "prepares" a plant, a worm, a scorching east wind, and sun to instruct Jonah.	High
Matthew 12:39–40	Alluded to	Death of Self	Jesus spoke of the "sign of Jonah", three days and	High

Reference	How used	Where	What Pastor Kim drew from it	Confidence
(alluded to via "Gospels")			nights pointing to Christ's death and resurrection.	
Exodus 3:18 / 5:3 / 8:27	Alluded to	Death of Self	Moses asked Pharaoh for a three days' journey into the wilderness to worship God.	High
Exodus 19:5–6	Alluded to	Death of Self	After the wilderness journey, Israel arrives at Sinai and God calls them His *segullah* (treasured possession).	High
Genesis 22:1–14	Alluded to	Death of Self	Abraham journeys three days to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac, representing the death of the old self in obedience to God.	High
Job (book of)	Alluded to	Relationship & Assurance	God permits suffering to continue in the life of Job to bear witness and reveal His divine purposes.	High

Elsewhere in the Service

Reference	How used	Where	What Pastor Kim / Service Leader drew from it	Confidence
Psalm 103:1–14	Read responsively	Liturgy before sermon	Responsive reading #45 celebrating God's benefits, compassion, and remembrance that we are dust.	High
Hebrews 4:16 / 10:19–22	Alluded to	Communion Prayer & Opening Prayer	Approaching the throne of grace with boldness; Jesus as our living High Priest who tore the veil.	High

Reference	How used	Where	What Pastor Kim / Service Leader drew from it	Confidence
1 Corinthians 15:12–28	Listed in catalog card	Catalog references	Catalog card lists this passage; it was not read or quoted in the sermon transcript (likely scheduled or related to resurrection theme). Flagged for review.	Low (absent from source)

Context and Application

Biblical and Historical Setting

Jonah is a northern prophet serving during the reign of Jeroboam II (2 Kings 14:25). After fleeing God's commission to prophesy against Nineveh, he was thrown overboard by Gentile sailors during a violent Mediterranean storm. Jonah 1:17 marks the narrative turning point where God provides a great fish to swallow Jonah. In the Hebrew Bible, Jonah 1:17 is designated as Jonah 2:1, making the fish's belly the explicit setting for the poem that follows. The psalm-like prayer in chapter 2 borrows heavily from canonical lament and thanksgiving psalms, demonstrating how an eighth-century BC prophet processed severe discipline and near-death experience within the framework of Israel's worship vocabulary.

How Pastor Kim Applied the Passages

Pastor Kim connects Jonah's three days in the fish to broader biblical theology:

1. **The Sovereignty of Preparation:** Just as God prepared (*manah*) the fish, the plant, the worm, and the wind, God sovereignly constructs the specific crises and boundaries of our lives.
2. **The "Three Days and Three Nights" Motif:** This span is treated not merely as chronological time, but as a symbolic threshold of transformation: Israel journeying into the wilderness to hear that they are God's *segullah* (Exod 19), Abraham journeying three days to Moriah to sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22), and Jesus spending three days in the tomb (Matt 12).
3. **The Womb of Rebirth:** Drawing on the shift in Hebrew gender forms for the fish, Pastor Kim presents the belly (*me'eh*) as a womb where the old identity is stripped away so that a resurrected servant emerges.

4. **Covenantal Prayer:** Jonah's cry to "the Lord his God" (*Yahweh Elohayw*) shows that true prayer is founded on covenant relationship. Like a mother interpreting the babbles of a baby, God interprets our imperfect words and answers our being.

Slips and Flags

- **1 Corinthians 15:12–28:** The catalog card lists 1 Corinthians 15:12–28 under references, but this text is neither read nor directly quoted in the sermon segment. It is flagged for the reviewer to verify whether it was intended for an associated communion reading or an adjacent service component.
- **Red Sea to Mount Sinai Chronology:** Pastor Kim remarks that after crossing the Red Sea, Israel traveled "three days and three nights and arrive at Mount Sinai." Biblically, Israel traveled three days into the wilderness of Shur to reach Marah (Exod 15:22–23), and arrived at Sinai in the third month (Exod 19:1). Reviewer should note this conflation of the three-day wilderness trek with the arrival at Sinai.

Word studies

1. Prepared / Provided

- **Word as spoken:** 준비하셨다 (junbi-hasyeotda)
- **Transliteration:** *manah*
- **Original script:** מָנָה
- **Meaning taught:** Sovereignly appointed, assigned, or prepared beforehand. God knows the crisis before it occurs and pre-positions the instruments of discipline and deliverance (seen in Jonah 1:17 with the fish, and Jonah 4:6–8 with the plant, worm, east wind, and sun).
- **Passage:** Jonah 1:17 (also Jonah 4:6, 7, 8)
- **Section heading:** The Special Environment God Prepared

2. Fish (Masculine to Feminine shift)

- **Word as spoken:** 남성 물고기에서 여성 물고기 (masculine fish to feminine fish)
- **Transliteration:** *dag* (masculine) / *dagah* (feminine)
- **Original script:** דָּגָה / דָּג

- **Meaning taught:** In Jonah 1:17, the fish is initially masculine (*dag*), but in Jonah 2:1 it shifts to feminine (*dagah*). Pastor Kim highlights the interpretive tradition that the fish becomes like a mother's womb (*me'eh* / belly) intended to safely hold, discipline, and birth Jonah into a renewed calling.
- **Passage:** Jonah 1:17–2:1
- **Section heading:** The Special Environment God Prepared

3. Treasured Possession

- **Word as spoken:** 세굴라 (segulla)
- **Transliteration:** *segullah*
- **Original script:** סְגֻלָּה
- **Meaning taught:** A special treasure, prized personal property, or cherished covenant people. Pastor Kim highlights this as Israel's new identity received at Mount Sinai after shedding their slave identity through the three-day wilderness trek.
- **Passage:** Exodus 19:5
- **Section heading:** Three Days and Three Nights: The Death of the Self and Being Born Anew

4. His God / My God

- **Word as spoken:** 그의 하나님 / 나의 하나님 (geu-ui hananim / na-ui hananim)
- **Transliteration:** *Yahweh Elohayw* / *Yahweh Elohay*
- **Original script:** יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו / יְהוָה אֱלֹהָי
- **Meaning taught:** The personal, relational covenant name of God. Jonah does not pray to a distant deity or generic force, but to "his God," establishing that the bedrock of biblical prayer is mutual relational knowledge.
- **Passage:** Jonah 2:1, 6
- **Section heading:** A Cry Grounded in Relationship and the Assurance of an Answer

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Places and timeline

Places Table

Name	What happened there, as taught	Modern location, if established	Reference
Nineveh	Great city characterized by great evil; God sent Jonah there because His mercy and sovereignty are greater than its wickedness.	Near modern Mosul, northern Iraq	Jonah 1:2
The Ship / Lower Deck	Jonah fled from God's presence, went down into the hold, and fell fast asleep while a violent storm raged above.	Mediterranean Sea	Jonah 1:5
The Belly of the Fish	The dark, sovereignly prepared environment where Jonah spent three days and nights; functioned like a womb of spiritual rebirth and prayer.	Depths of the Mediterranean Sea	Jonah 1:17–2:10
Mount Sinai	The mountain where Israel arrived after their wilderness journey to hear God declare them His treasured possession (*segullah*).	Traditional site: Jebel Musa, southern Sinai Peninsula	Exodus 19:1–6
Mount Moriah	The mountain reached after a three-day journey where Abraham was tested to offer Isaac, representing the death of the self; identified by Pastor Kim with Mount Zion.	Temple Mount, Jerusalem	Genesis 22:2, 14

Timeline Table

Date as given	Event	Reference
c. 2000 BC	Abraham journeys three days and three nights to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac.	Genesis 22:4
c. 1446 BC	Moses leads Israel out of Egypt on a three-day journey into the wilderness toward Mount Sinai.	Exodus 3:18; 19:1
c. 8th Century BC	Jonah is swallowed by a great fish and prays for three days and three nights in its belly before being vomited onto dry land.	Jonah 1:17–2:10

Date as given	Event	Reference
c. AD 30 / 33	Jesus Christ fulfills the "sign of Jonah" through His death, burial for three days, and resurrection.	Matthew 12:39–40

(Note: Dates represent standard conservative biblical chronology derived from the narrative events referenced by Pastor Kim.)

Teaching outline

Main Passage: Jonah 1:17–2:10

Big Idea: God prepares places of deep distress not to destroy us, but as a womb where our old self dies and we learn to call boldly upon our personal God who hears and responds to who we are.

Movement 1: The Beauty of the Unspoken (Jonah 1:17–2:1)

- **Key Truth:** God preserved Jonah's prayer as sacred poetry, where the unspoken background, God's persistent covenant love, speaks louder than the words themselves.
- **Biblical Insight:** Just like the Korean poetic aesthetic of "white space" (*yeobaek-ui mihak*), where simple agreement between lovers communicates everything under the moon, Jonah's prayer is framed by God's silent, relentless mercy pursuing a rebellious prophet.
- **Supporting Visuals:** Visual 1 (Title Card: The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish).

Movement 2: A Sovereignly Prepared Womb (Jonah 1:17)

- **Key Truth:** The storms and crises of life are not random accidents; God sovereignly appoints the specific environment where He meets us.
- **Biblical Insight:** God "provided" or "prepared" (*manah*) the fish, just as He later prepared the vine, the worm, and the scorching wind (Jonah 4). In Hebrew, the fish shifts grammatically from masculine to feminine, functioning not as a watery tomb, but as a maternal womb (*me'im*) designed to birth a newly commissioned servant.
- **Supporting Visuals:** Visual 2 (Concept: God Prepared the Fish).

Movement 3: Three Days and Three Nights: The Death of Self (Jonah 1:17; 2:10)

- **Key Truth:** Spiritual transformation requires the death of our former self, self-righteousness, and stubborn pride.
- **Biblical Insight:** The biblical motif of "three days and three nights" marks a threshold of dying and rising:
- *Exodus:* Israel journeys through the wilderness for three days to shed their slave mentality and hear God name them His treasured possession (*segullah*, Exod 19:5).
- *Genesis 22:* Abraham walks three days to Mount Moriah to surrender his dearest treasure, Isaac, dying to his old self before receiving resurrection life.
- *The Gospels:* Jesus points to the "sign of Jonah" as the pattern of His own burial and resurrection (Matt 12:40).
- **Supporting Visuals:** Visual 3 (Timeline / Typology: Three Days and Three Nights).

Movement 4: Crying Out to "My God" (Jonah 2:1–2)

- **Key Truth:** Biblical prayer is anchored in personal covenant relationship, not empty ritual or magical manipulation.
- **Biblical Insight:** Jonah prayed to "the Lord his God" (*Yahweh Elohayw*). Unlike pagan sailors crying out in fear or atheists experiencing awe with no one to thank, the believer possesses the royal privilege of a Father to run to. Like a mother interpreting the babbles of her infant, God understands our faltering words and responds to our very being and identity in Christ.
- **Supporting Visuals:** Visual 4 (Key Verse / Concept: Praying to "His God").

Closing Response

- Recognize the difficult circumstance you are in today not as an execution chamber, but as God's prepared womb.
- Lay down your self-effort, pride, and rebellion at the feet of Jesus.
- Cry out to the Lord your God with bold assurance, knowing that He knows you, loves you, and is bringing your life up from the pit.

Study guide

Core Truth

God sovereignly prepares times and places of distress, like the belly of the fish, not to destroy us, but as a womb where our old self dies and we discover the royal privilege of crying out to our personal God who responds to who we are.

Key Verse

> “From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the LORD his God”
>
> Jonah 2:1 (BSB)

Background Notes

1. **The Literary Frame and "White Space":** Jonah 2 is an exquisite Hebrew psalm embedded within a narrative frame (1:17 and 2:10). Just as calligraphy and minimalist poetry rely on "white space" to convey what cannot be stated directly, Jonah's poetic prayer highlights the unspoken reality that God's covenant grace was actively holding Jonah even while he sank into the abyss.
2. **God Appointed (*Manah*):** In Jonah 1:17, the word translated "provided" or "prepared" is the Hebrew verb *manah*. God is revealed as the supreme Sovereign who commands nature: appointing the great fish, and later in chapter 4 appointing a plant, a worm, a scorching wind, and the sun to teach His servant.
3. **From Tomb to Womb:** In the original language, the fish is introduced as masculine (*dag gadol*) in 1:17a, but shifts to feminine (*dagah*) in 1:17b and 2:1. Ancient commentators and Hebrew scholars note that the word for the fish's belly (*me'eh*) often denotes internal organs or a mother's womb, transforming the fish from an agent of execution into an incubator of spiritual renewal.
4. **Three Days as a Threshold:** Throughout Scripture, a "three days" period marks a testing ground where the old identity dies so that God's new purpose can begin: Israel's wilderness journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai (Exod 19), Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah (Gen 22), and Jesus' three days in the heart of the earth (Matt 12:40).

Discussion Questions

1. **Understanding the Text:** When Jonah was thrown into the sea, why did God send a great fish instead of letting him drown or delivering him immediately to dry land? What does the word "prepared" tell us about God's purpose?
2. **Exploring the Themes:** In what ways did the three days and three nights in the fish represent a "death of self" for Jonah? How does this parallel Israel's three-day

wilderness trek in Exodus and Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah in Genesis 22?

3. **Examining the Heart:** Pastor Kim compared knowing about someone famous (like a political leader) with having a genuine, two-way relationship. When you pray, do you pray to God as an abstract concept or truly as "the Lord your God"? What is the difference?
4. **Reflecting on God's Care:** Consider the illustration of a mother listening to a babbling baby. How does it comfort you to know that God responds to your *person* and your *identity* rather than requiring perfect, polished theological words?
5. **Personal Application:** What "belly of the fish" circumstance are you facing today? How does viewing this trial as a "prepared womb of grace" rather than a punishment change the way you pray and respond to God?

Phone Summary (WhatsApp)

When life throws you into the deep, remember that God has prepared your circumstances not to destroy you, but as a womb where your old self dies and new life begins. True prayer is not polished performance; it is a child running to a loving Father. Cry out boldly today to the Lord your God, who hears the babbling of your heart and answers you.
"From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the LORD his God" (Jonah 2:1, BSB)

Prayer

A prayer for “The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish”

Jonah 1:17-2:10

Lord our God, you are the Creator and Sovereign Ruler
who governs all nature and human history.
Greater than every great city and its evil,
you command the great wind, the storm, and the huge fish.
Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in love,
you remember that we are dust
and remove our transgressions as far as the east is from the west.

When we are hurled into the heart of the seas
and your waves and breakers sweep over us,
you prepare a place to meet us beforehand.

In love, you make the fish's belly a womb of new life
and bring our life up from the pit.
You know us better than we know ourselves;
you call us your treasured possession
and hear our babbling cries from the deep.

Forgive us, Lord, for running from your word
and hiding in the lowest deck of the ship,
refusing to pray when storms rage.
We have clung to worthless idols
and turned away from the grace that could be ours.
We have rested in mere knowledge about you,
tried by our own strength to escape trouble,
and held on to our past ugliness and old inclinations.
Have mercy on us, and wash our consciences clean
in the precious blood of Jesus.

We thank you with shouts of grateful praise
that salvation comes from the Lord.
Thank you for Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the sign of Jonah
through his death and resurrection.
Because he lives as our High Priest at the throne of grace,
there is no dividing wall between us and you,
and in our distress we can run to you as Lord our God.

In every hardship and storm, help us see
the special time and place you prepare to meet us.
Lead us and our church into the place of prayer,
where our old slave identity is stripped away
and we put on the garments of righteousness.
Have compassion on our neighbors who live in emptiness
with no one to thank or call upon,
and bring them to cry out to you and be born anew.

Here we are, Lord.
Like Abraham walking three days to the mountain of worship,
we yield our old selves to die before you.
Brought up onto dry land,

we will make good what we have vowed
and offer you our lives with shouts of grateful praise.

Through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
to whom belong all salvation, glory, and praise forever.
Amen.

A blessing

May the Lord, who is compassionate and gracious,
redeem your life from the pit and crown you with love and compassion,
and may the Father who knows you keep you in his unfailing love,
now and forevermore. Amen.[1]

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[1] Drawn from Psalm 103:4, 8, 13-14.

Scripture behind this prayer: Jonah 1:17-2:10; Psalm 103:1-14; Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 10:19-22; Matthew 12:39-40; Exodus 3:18; Exodus 19:5; Genesis 22:1-5.

A prayer written with the help of AI to go with Pastor Hoon Kim's sermon. These are not his own words. Shared on 15 November 2026, before its full review.

Review quiz

Questions

1. **Multiple Choice:** What Korean poem does Pastor Kim reference to explain the "aesthetics of white space" (*yeobaek-ui mihak*)?
2. A) *The Road Not Taken* by Robert Frost
3. B) *The Moon* by Kim Yong-taek
4. C) *Azaleas* by Kim Sowol
5. D) *Prelude* by Yun Dong-ju

1. **Short Answer:** What Hebrew verb (meaning "to appoint" or "to prepare beforehand") describes God's sovereign action in Jonah 1:17 and chapter 4?

1. **Multiple Choice:** According to the Hebrew grammatical insight shared by Pastor Kim, how does the description of the fish shift between Jonah 1:17a and 1:17b/2:1?
2. A) From small fish to sea monster
3. B) From singular to plural

4. C) From masculine (*dag*) to feminine (*dagah*)
5. D) From past tense to future tense

1. **Short Answer:** According to Pastor Kim, what did the belly of the fish spiritually represent for Jonah rather than an execution chamber?

1. **Multiple Choice:** In Exodus 19:5, after the three-day wilderness journey, what special Hebrew title did God give to Israel at Mount Sinai?
2. A) *Shalom* (Peace)
3. B) *Segullah* (Treasured possession)
4. C) *Goel* (Kinsman-redeemer)
5. D) *Kadosh* (Holy one)

1. **Short Answer:** How many days did Abraham journey toward Mount Moriah before offering Isaac as a burnt offering in Genesis 22?

1. **Multiple Choice:** What did Pastor Kim identify as the tragic emptiness experienced by atheists when encountering great beauty or awe in creation?
2. A) They cannot afford to travel to see it.
3. B) They feel deep awe and gratitude but have no personal Creator to thank.
4. C) They do not understand the scientific laws of nature.
5. D) They fear the power of natural disasters.

1. **Short Answer:** In Jonah 2:1, what specific phrase reveals the covenantal, relational foundation of Jonah's prayer?

1. **Multiple Choice:** How does God respond to our prayers when our words are clumsy and imperfect, according to the illustration of a mother and her baby?
2. A) He ignores us until we learn mature theological phrasing.
3. B) He reprimands us for not quoting Scripture correctly.
4. C) He responds first to our being, seeing our real needs just as a mother interprets her infant's babbles.
5. D) He requires an intermediary priest to reword our petitions.

Answer Key

1. **B) *The Moon* by Kim Yong-taek** *Found in:* Section 1 ("A Poem of Margins: The Prayer in the Fish's Belly")
2. ***Manah* (מָנָה)** *Found in:* Section 2 ("The Special Environment God Prepared" & Word Studies)
3. **C) From masculine (*dag*) to feminine (*dagah*)** *Found in:* Section 2 ("The Special Environment God Prepared")
4. **A maternal womb of spiritual rebirth / transformation** *Found in:* Section 2 ("The Special Environment God Prepared")
5. **B) *Segullah* (Treasured possession)** *Found in:* Section 3 ("Three Days and Three Nights: The Death of the Self and Being Born Anew")
6. **Three days (and three nights)** *Found in:* Section 3 ("Three Days and Three Nights: The Death of the Self and Being Born Anew")
7. **B) They feel deep awe and gratitude but have no personal Creator to thank** *Found in:* Section 4 ("A Cry Grounded in Relationship and the Assurance of an Answer")
8. **"To the Lord his God" (*Yahweh Elohayw*)** *Found in:* Section 4 ("A Cry Grounded in Relationship and the Assurance of an Answer")
9. **C) He responds first to our being, seeing our real needs just as a mother interprets her infant's babbles** *Found in:* Section 4 ("A Cry Grounded in Relationship and the Assurance of an Answer")

In three minutes

The Prayer in the Belly of the Fish, from Jonah chapter one, verse seventeen through chapter two, verse ten, was taught by Pastor Hoon Kim of N.E.W. Church. Pastor Kim begins by sharing a five-line poem called The Moon by the poet Kim Yong-taek, consisting only of simple words like, sure, I understand, yes, I will, me too, yeah, and okay. When spoken under the moonlight with someone you love, those few words carry deep affection because of the white space behind them. In the same way, Jonah's prayer in the fish's belly is Hebrew poetry, where the margins and setting speak deeply to our hearts. The setting begins when God prepared a huge fish. In the original language, the fish turns from masculine to feminine because the belly functions like a womb, a place prepared by God to give birth to new life. God prepares an environment in our trials where we can meet him. Jonah stayed there for three days and three nights. In Scripture, this period always

signifies a time when the old self dies so a new life can begin. Moses led Israel on a three-day journey into the wilderness so they could shed their slave identity and become God's treasured possession at Mount Sinai. Abraham walked for three days to Mount Moriah, surrendering his beloved son and dying to his former self. In our hardships, God prepares a time and space of prayer where our past sins and old self are stripped away so we can put on the new person. Finally, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. True prayer is grounded in a personal relationship. An atheist in awe before creation has no one to thank, but believers have a personal God to call upon. Jonah realized in his distress that he had to pray, and he had absolute assurance that God answered him. Like a mother who understands the needs of her babbling infant, God responds to who we are before our words are even formed. In every trial, we can run boldly to our God, knowing he hears us and transforms us.

A week of WhatsApp messages

Day 1

Jonah 1:17

God prepared a huge fish before Jonah was even cast into the sea. In our hardships, God prepares a specific time and space to meet us. The belly of the fish served like a womb to bring forth new life.

Question: Where has God placed you right now to stop and meet with him?

Day 2

Exodus 19

Israel traveled three days in the wilderness to shed their slave identity and meet God at Mount Sinai. God brought them there to hear his voice and learn that they were his treasured possession. Prayer is that three-day space where our old self is stripped away.

Question: What old habit or mindset do you need God to strip away this week?

Day 3

Genesis 22

Abraham journeyed for three days to Mount Moriah to offer Isaac in obedience to God. That time symbolized the death of his old self as he surrendered what was most precious to

him. In prayer, we let our former self die so God can renew our life.

Question: What precious thing is God asking you to surrender into his hands?

Day 4

Jonah 2:1

Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the belly of the fish. True prayer begins with a personal relationship, knowing that the Lord is truly your God. It is an incredible privilege to have someone to run to when suffering strikes.

Question: Do you approach God this week as your own personal Father and God?

Day 5

Jonah 2:2

Jonah cried out in his distress, and God answered him. Hardship is the very time God calls us to pray and understand his purpose. God responds first to who we are, knowing what we need just like a mother understands her babbling child.

Question: Will you bring your honest cries to God today, trusting he hears you?

Scripture quotations: The Holy Bible, Berean Standard Bible (BSB), in the public domain, from eBible.org.