

## Monday Evening Bible Reading Group: May 15<sup>th</sup>: Jeremiah 38: Some Notes

**Themes:** Some think this is an alternative version of Chapter 37. Or it might be a third and fourth change in Jeremiah's imprisonment. Very few rulers have been so absolute that they didn't need to seek to identify and please their real friends. Sycophancy tends to flow in two directions. (Given who took over when Zedekiah did give up (too late for his own good!), he didn't choose his friends very well.) Maybe there is a message about the dangers of extremism: though it has always been very tempting for the person in power to reckon that dead enemies cause no problems. The Ethiopian Ebed-melek (which means simply "Servant of the King") is yet another Bible example of the outsider who turns up trumps: see the Good Samaritan in the New Testament. I love this recognition of outsiders in what seems at times a very nationalistic book. Note the detail of Ebed's kindness: cloths to protect Jeremiah from the rope. Kindness means an eye for detail.

**Quotations:** "I'm telling you this for your own good." "Those so-called friends of yours."

**Clarifications:** Plumbing the depths is a popular Bible theme. Zechariah 9:11. Psalm 69: 2, 15, 20. Jonah in the belly of the whale. Job. The Crucifixion. God doesn't walk away and leave us, though it might feel like it.

**Questions:** Do we actually feel God more keenly at low points?\_

In no Strange Land: Francis Thompson

O world invisible, we view thee,  
O world intangible, we touch thee,  
O world unknowable, we know thee,  
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

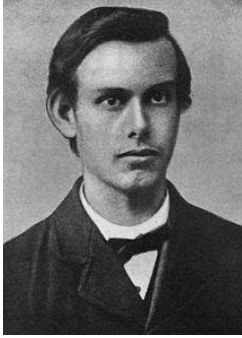
Does the fish soar to find the ocean,  
The eagle plunge to find the air--  
That we ask of the stars in motion  
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,  
And our benumbed conceiving soars!--  
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,  
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places;--  
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!  
'Tis ye, 'tis your estranged faces,  
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)  
Cry;--and upon thy so sore loss  
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder  
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my Soul, my daughter,  
Cry,--clinging Heaven by the hems;  
And lo, Christ walking on the water  
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!



[Francis Thompson](#)