



### 3. HOW DID JERRY GET OUT OF THE WELL?

IN only two years of study, I earned my certificate and a tutor's position in the language lab. In fact, the master was explaining that job to me at the exact moment when all the trouble started. I'll never forget how his office door blew open, and I flew backward off my stool onto the linoleum! For a moment, I was sure that we were about to die.

Barak never had been one to wait for his turn, and he didn't often knock, but this time he had exploded into the master's office gasping as if he had outrun all the air. He was dripping with more sweat than usual and waving his puny arms like some insect drowning in a pool. Was the building on fire? Why were there no alarms?

I arose very slowly, pretending that my head cracked open, but the master never looked even once at me. His eyes were fixed on the intruder wheezing like a towhee, "Jer, Jer, Ree." Barak kept repeating "Jer, Jer, Ree" until I had to laugh, but then whole words belched out, and suddenly paragraphs altogether. What a dramatic performance he gave to announce his discovery that Jeremiah was a mummy!

Within a day or two, his evidence had been pinned to the features board in the main gallery. It attracted more attention there almost every day until it disappeared. Luckily, I translated part of it for use in a student reading exercise, so I can show that much of it to you now. And I ask you, how can you believe in Djeremmai? How can it be true? Those were the questions I asked my class as I wondered to myself, how could Barak have become the master's favorite?

**DJEREMMAI<sup>1</sup>**  
**the mummy who became Jeremiah<sup>2</sup>**

[adapted from *Jer* 1:2-19] **Say to the judge the words that I put into your mouth. Be not afraid of him. If he attacks you, he never will prevail against you, for I will ring his city with men of bronze. I will deliver you.**<sup>3</sup>

These words came to me from my lord Wahibre in the thirteenth year when **Djusea** ruled in **Jericho**, and more of my lord's words came to me thereafter.<sup>4</sup>

[from 2:5-36] **What fault has this judge found in me, that he turns away from me? I sent him from Egypt into a land of plenty, but now he sends its fruits to Babylon! He listens to Bael.**<sup>5</sup> **He describes Re as an abomination! I have given him no cause for this.**

**Say to him: I planted you as a seedling for a good vine: how then have you turned into a degenerate plant so strange to me? Did you not drink the waters of Egypt and Assyria?**<sup>6</sup> **Rebellion will be corrected. I punish those who betray me. You promised not to transgress, but you have forgotten Re for days without number. Do not arouse my anger. It will not be turned away. If I am aroused, I will shame you before all nations.**

[from 4:5-21] **Voices of the Danaäns** condemned the bad judge.<sup>7</sup> **Watchers came from their far country, and they cried out against the traitor. They called for war. They called for destruction of the rebel city. How soon would I hear the sound of their trumpets? How**

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<sup>1</sup> The name *Jeremiah* appears to derive from Egyptian Djeremmai (*lion-like strong is the word*). The Egyptian scribe associated with that phrase served Wahibre I (*Distant voice of the word*, aka **Psamatchek I**) and his successor **Nakaü II**, two lords of dynasty 26 who ruled from the city of **Saäuz** ("Sais") in the Nile delta. The scribe recorded his experiences the last days of Egyptian colonial **Jericho**, c. 612-609 BCE (Barak's note).

<sup>2</sup> Djeremmai is a mummy classic, to be compared to *The Voyage of Sanefer*, *The Tale of Sinuhe* and *The Tale of the Shipwrecked Sailor* (Barak's note). [For those restorations, see Vol. 2 chapters 27, 47 and 48 (ed).]

<sup>3</sup> **Red font** identifies messages received by the scribe in Jericho from his lord in Saäuz (Barak's note).

<sup>4</sup> **Djusea** (*bad is the great man*, "Josiah") refers to an Egyptian judge at Jericho, an appointee of Wahibre. He has judged at Jericho for thirteen years, but recently Wahibre has become ill, and the bad judge has joined Babylon in revolt (Barak's note).

<sup>5</sup> **Bael** (*great voice of the lion*) calls for tithes to Babylon (Barak's note).

<sup>6</sup> **Assyria** cooperates with both the **Saites** in Egypt and the **Danaäns** in Sudan to promote mutual interests in trade and defense. The alliance had begun with **Piankhy** of **Qash**, **Pulu** of **Lydia** and **Sargon II** of Assyria, and it had been confirmed by Sinnakhaibre, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal, but now the last of the Assyrian kings, the weak Ashur-uballit II, is under attack by his cousin **Nebopolassar**, and both are seeking allies (Barak's note).

<sup>7</sup> Danaäns command the army of the Nile in partnership with Assyria. Judges in Egypt keep law and order there, but they have few or no military forces under their direct command (Barak's note).

soon would I see their battle standards? The lioness surely would come from her jungle. She would come to lay waste to the crops. The city would starve.

[from 5:2-31] Djusea and his sons lied to me. They said that they were faithful. I warned them: out of the jungle, a lioness will come to destroy the crops, and a wolf will slay you in the night.<sup>8</sup> You will be torn in pieces if you continue to transgress. Our lord sends word to you by me. This he says: **shall I not be avenged on such rebels as these? They stir my people to rebellion. They listen to the lies of Bael, who is not their lord. Shall I know these things and not visit them?**

[from 6:10-25] The judge and his sons do not listen to the lord. They say that they want peace, but they tithe to the lord's enemy. They scorn the lord's reproaches. He is full of anger: I must not keep it secret. To whom shall I speak and give warning? I will pour out the lord's anger to his people in his city. They must know that he will strike them. Their houses, fields and women he will give to others. They must no longer follow his enemy's laws.<sup>9</sup> The lord says, **when I visit you, O Jericho, your evil will cast you down. Fathers and sons will fall together. The neighbor and his friend will perish side by side. Armies will come from the south and the north. Great nations will come against you from both sides of the world. They will bring their bows and spears. They will come by sea and land. They will show you no mercy.**

[from 7:1-28] Word came to me from the lord that I should stand at the gate of the tower and warn the people. So there I stood, and I said to the people: amend your ways. Give your gifts to **Re**. Re gave this land to you. Be loyal to Re and you may continue to live here forever. Bael has given nothing to you. Bael lies. Bael will never help you. Trust not the lies of Bael, he that desecrates the house of Re. This says your lord to you, his people: **how shall I be free of Bael, this abomination? How has the house of Re become the den of a robber? I will destroy him, and restore Re. I brought you out of the land of Egypt, and I am your lord always, and you are my people. You always must follow my commands.**

They did not listen. They did not try to hear. The people turned their heads and walked away in the counsels and imaginings of their corrupted hearts. They no longer listened to my voice. Truth that their fathers knew had perished among them. It was lost.

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<sup>8</sup> The lioness **Satkharat** represents the Danaäns. The wolf represents the Assyrians. These are identified on shields and battle standards. The Babylonians at this time perhaps were represented also by the wolf (Barak's note).

<sup>9</sup> According to the Bible, workmen of King Josiah discovered Deuteronomy, a second book of law, when they restored the temple in Jerusalem. [Barak assumes that Djusea converted the old tower of Re in Jericho into a temple of Bael, and he replaced the old laws of Re with laws of Bael. The two laws now appear to differ little, but they may have been conformed when Jewish law was produced (ed).]

[from 8:16] So I told the lord, and soon I heard the snorting of the vizier's great horses: I felt the land shake with the pounding of their hooves as they destroyed the crops.

[from 11:9] And the lord said unto me, **I have found conspiracy. The law-breakers have broken the agreements that their fathers made with me. Beg not for them to be spared! Don't cry for them.**

[from 13:10] **They refuse to hear my words. They walk in the imaginings of their faithless hearts. They listen only to Bael. They have turned against me, and I will consume them by famine.**

[from 14: 1-19] Now there was starvation in the land. The people mourned. They sent their children for water, but the little ones found no water when they came to the well, and they returned with empty vessels. Everywhere the ground cracked like broken pottery. There was no rain, and the plowmen forsook the fields.

I said, good lord, the prophet promises them that the famine soon will end. There soon will be rain again, if they sacrifice their children.<sup>10</sup>

Then said the lord to me, **this liar makes promises that he cannot keep. The famine will not end until he is cast out of my house.**

[from 19:1-13] **Go to the gate of the city, and say, hear the words of your lord. You have brought evil upon yourselves by following the counsels of Bael. You have polluted the land with the blood of innocents. I never told you to do this, nor have I allowed it ever in the past. In days to come, this city shall be infamous as the valley of starvation. Here you will die, and your bodies will be meat for birds and dogs. All will abandon this land because of the droughts that Re will bring upon it. The famine will not end until the prophet is cast out of my house.**<sup>11</sup>

[from 20:1-6] Now a servant of the prophet came to me when he heard that I had spoken these things. He struck me on the mouth, and he put me in chains outside the house, and there I spent the night, shouting that the prophet and all in his house would be taken as slaves into Egypt, and not only them but also Djusea himself. And the blood of Djusea's sons would be shed because they had ordered the people to sacrifice their children.

[from 21:4-7] I cried out against Djusea, the lord will turn back against you every weapon of war that you use against the king of Assyria when he besieges your walls. He will fight you with

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<sup>10</sup> Now, c. 610 BCE, Wahibre has died, and his son young Nakaü II rules in Saäuz. Nakaü apparently wants to show the world that he is a force to be reckoned with (Barak's note).

<sup>11</sup> Famine in this period resulted in human sacrifice among Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Greeks, but the practice was not allowed by the judges of Saäuz under their law of heaven (Barak's note).

all of his anger, fury, and wrath. Bael will not save your sons from the sword. The city will be taken. You and your sons will be shown no mercy.<sup>12</sup>

[from 26:8-24] And it came to pass in the morning that the prophet took me from the stocks, saying, you surely are about to die. He brought me into the tower, and there Djusea heard the complaints against me. And the prophet said to him and to the elders of the region assembled there that I must die, for I had prophesied against the city.

And I said to the judge, your lord speaks through me. If you amend your ways, and obey him, he may forgive you. If you follow the prophet, you and your sons will fall. As for me, I am in your hand, but if you put me to death, you will bring more innocent blood upon yourself and this city. Innocent blood will be avenged.

Then said the elders to the judge: this man speaks on behalf of a great lord. He should not be given into the hands of the prophet to be put to death.

[from 27: 16-20] I also spoke to the elders, saying, you call him prophet but he is a liar. He does not obey the law. Why do you allow him to speak in this city? Why do you let him loot the house of Re?

The elders did not answer.

[from 32:2-20] The judge ordered me to prison, but I said to him that my lord surely would deliver me, and I charged my assistant Baraänkh to keep the book.<sup>13</sup>

[from 36:4-32] I sent word to my lord about my imprisonment. I called Baraänkh to my cell, and he wrote from my own mouth the words that the judge had spoken before me. Baraänkh wrote them in a scroll, and he read them aloud in the ears of our lord. He read them also by the gate of the city, in the hearing of the people coming in and going out. And the son of a Babylonian scribe<sup>14</sup> went into the tower, and he repeated to his father the words that he had heard Baraänkh read into the ears of the people.

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<sup>12</sup> As it appears, the Africans expected the rebellion in Jericho to be addressed by their allies in Assyria. When that assistance did not come, the army of the Nile marched into Asia, and they were joined by Nakaü II, the new judge in Saäuz. They chased away Nebopolassar's army at Meggido, and then marched on Jericho, where Nakaü took Djusea captive, executed Djusea's sons, and left the city abandoned (Barak's note).

<sup>13</sup> From this point Baraänkh (*voice of living word*) continues the record that his predecessor has been compiling (Barak's note).

<sup>14</sup> Apparently, nobody in Jericho can read the script apart from Baraänkh and an unnamed Egyptian scribe. The bad judge is illiterate, as are the common people, but they understand what they hear in their ears. The city is Egyptian-speaking at this time (Barak's note).



And the scribes summoned Baraänkh to them. They ordered him to bring the scroll that he had read into the ears of the people. And he came with the scroll, and they said to him, sit down now, and read it in our ears. So Baraänkh read it to them, and they asked him where the words had come from.

He answered that the words came from me. He wrote them in ink in my book as I spoke them from my mouth.

They took the scroll from him, and he went into hiding. They gave the scroll to the judge, and he summoned an Egyptian scribe to read its words into his ears. And the scribe read the words to the judge as he sat by a fire. And as the scroll was read to him, he cut it with his knife, and he cast the leaves into the fire until all the writing was burnt.

And the scribe sent word to Baraänkh that the judge had destroyed the scroll, so Baraänkh took another scroll and wrote upon it all of the same words that had been written on the scroll that the judge had destroyed. He wrote upon the new scroll the words that had been written on the old scroll, as well as he recalled it.<sup>15</sup>

[from 37: 1-17] Now the lord came out of Egypt with the vizier and the army of the Nile to relieve Harran. Babylonians guarded both the shore and the pass from Egypt, but the vizier smote their leader, and the rest of them fled in fear.<sup>16</sup>

And the sons of Djusea tortured me for information, but I would not speak to them. They tortured me in the room of Jonathan the scribe: for they had made his room my prison. And there I remained until Djusea sent for me, and then I was taken out and brought before him. He asked me if the lord was coming to destroy the city.

I asked him how I had offended that his sons tortured me? I had never lied to him about anything. I had always told him the truth. Where was his false prophet who had said that the lord would not come against him? I asked him to set me free, lest I die in prison of starvation, but he ordered me back to prison, to be thrown a piece of bread daily, as long as there was bread in the city, and there I was to remain.

[from 38: 1-6] But as the lord marched toward the city, Djusea's sons cast me into a well because I would not answer their questions. They lowered me down with ropes, and the bottom was

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<sup>15</sup> This is an unusual admission in an ancient document, an admission that the words may not be entirely accurate. This may argue for the document's authenticity (Barak's note).

<sup>16</sup> Jericho clearly has no ability to fight an open battle with any real army at this time. In Biblical Kings and Chronicles, Josiah is a heroic king who is killed by pharaoh in a huge battle at Megiddo, or he later dies from wounds suffered there, but neither of those accounts can be true (Barak's note).

only mire, and there I remained without food or water for many days until the city fell, and I was found.

[from 39:4-14] As the lord approached the city, Djusea and his sons fled by night into the desert, but the lord detected their escape. They were pursued and overtaken only a short distance away. And they were brought back before the lord who sat there himself and passed judgment upon them. Djusea's sons were executed before his eyes, and then he was blinded and bound in chains to be taken back to Egypt, along with other rebels and the prophet of Babylon.<sup>17</sup>

Before he departed, the lord spoke to the guard who had found me in the well. He said that I should be raised, prepared to travel, and brought back home.

[from 40:1-4] And the guard said to me, as he released me from the ropes that bound me, that I soon would be home, where I would be cared for by the queen herself!

And so Jericho was abandoned forever.

[from 45:1-2] These were the words of Baraänkh that he wrote for Djeremmai and he kept the book until the fourth year of Djoankhmei as judge.<sup>18</sup>

How did Jerry get out of the well?

Baraänkh gave him a hand.



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<sup>17</sup>In the Bible, these punishments were inflicted on Judahite king Zedekiah and his sons. See 2 Kings 25:1-7; 2 Chronicles 36:12; Jeremiah 32:4-5; 34:2-3; 39:1-7; 52:4-11; Ezekiel 12:13. None of these accounts can be true (Barak's note).

<sup>18</sup>The fourth year appears to be 605 BCE, the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. Judge Djoankhmei (*living judge of the lion*, "Jehoiakim") likely set up court in Jerusalem when Jericho was abandoned. At Jerusalem in 587, Neferibre gave his daughter in marriage to the son of Nebuchadnezzar (Barak's note).