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## **The Syro-Phoenician Woman ...educating the Messiah**

**based on Mark 7:26-30 and Matthew 15:21-28.**

**by Ralph Milton**

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"You can't go in there," said Peter.

"Well, I *am* going in there whether you like it or not."

"I said, you can't go in there, woman."

"I am going in, mister. I have a sick daughter at home, and I am going in there and that prophet of yours is going to fix her. Now get out of my way before I give you a swift kick in the shins."

Peter jumped aside. The fierce eyes of the woman frightened him. He followed her into the house. "I told her you didn't want to be disturbed, Jesus. But she wouldn't listen."

"Jesus? That is your name?" Her voice was fierce and desperate. "They say you are a prophet. They say you are a very mighty prophet. Some say you are the Messiah. All right, I'm asking you. No, I'm begging you, Jesus, Lord, son of David, help my daughter. She is desperately sick with epilepsy. If she doesn't get help, she will die."

Jesus was sitting on a mat in a corner of the room away from the hot sunshine coming in through the window. He was meditating--trying to rest, trying to regain some strength after the exhausting work in Capernaum. Jesus was tense and tired and annoyed at the woman for intruding on his retreat. He kept his eyes closed, hoping she would take the hint and leave.

"Look, I'm sorry. But I need your help, Jesus. My daughter is dying and I *need your help!*"

"Just tell her to leave, Jesus," said Peter. "She'll listen to you."

"I can't help you. I'm sorry," Jesus said quietly. "That's just the way it is. I was sent to the people of Israel. To the Jews. Please leave." His voice had the edge of utter exhaustion.

"Surely, if you are a man of God, you have come to *all* of God's people."

"The children of Israel are God's people. Look, I'm sorry. But you don't take the bread that is meant for the children and feed it to your puppy, do you." Jesus smiled just a little during the last comment, perhaps to soften the insult. The smile gave her hope.

"Right," she said, her eyes flaming with desperation. "But even the mutts on the street get to eat some of the scraps off the family table. Surely, Jesus, your God has enough love to give a little to those of us who are not Jewish!"

Jesus recoiled a little. His hand massaged his forehead as if to ease a headache. He felt the woman's piercing eyes. Through his mind flashed the stories of his people, the wonderful humor of Jonah who was sent to bring God's message to the hated Ninevites, the moving story of Ruth, the foreigner, who became an ancestor to the great King David, and the stories his own mother had told him of his birth--of foreign Magi who came bearing gifts.

"You are right," said Jesus barely above a whisper. "Of course you are right. You are also very courageous. Go home. Your daughter will be well."

"Thank you," she said, and now her mother's tenderness went out to Jesus. "Go back to your meditation. You look as if you need the rest."

"Meditation, yes," Jesus said quietly. "You have given me much to meditate upon."

**Ralph Milton has written a number of books,  
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