

## Excerpt from Rising From The Dead by Dr Suzanne Humphries.

### Conversation between Miriam and Dr Suzanne regarding women as second-class citizens.

Question: So in Leviticus 12, if a woman gives birth to a male child, she's unclean, but if she gives birth to a female child, she is double filthy?

The answer from Miriam was:

*"How would you know why God said that? In one respect it's totally practical. When a woman is pregnant her hormones and body function differently according to the sex of the child.*

*"God specified a different time frame for a boy or a girl baby. I don't know why. But apparently there are hormonal differences when you bear a boy or a girl. Some people say that healing time is different between sexes too.*

*"God can call women spiritually unclean if he wants, but as a mother who has had two babies, the last thing I wanted was a man up there even four months after I had had a baby.*

*"I prefer to look at it this way: God knew that the culture would become abusive towards women, so in order to give women space to heal, and bond with their children, he gave a 'spiritual' reason—knowing that a man thinking about the law, and God's comment about 'uncleanness' might be the only way to overcome the male urges of a rampant wanger.*

*"To me, this is a sign of God's forethought and love. He doesn't want a woman to be 'forced' by any man, to do something she can't, and the law is to her advantage, because if a man tries to force her, she can quote the law against him:*

*"'And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying **three and thirty days**; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.'*

*"This is actually incredibly gracious IMO. It's around 30 days before the bleeding stops . . . the red blood stops within seven days, but there is a pale pinkish discharge that continues after that similar to what weeps off a skin scrape . . . which I suppose is what it sort of is inside . . . But for the mother,*

*the lining of the uterus takes a long time to heal after the placenta has come away. Consider the size of the placenta: that had 'sinuses'—quite big blood tunnels . . . and many of them going nearly through the whole width of the wall of the uterus, and even though the uterus shrinks afterwards, the whole wall of the uterus is susceptible to problems if a mother, who is stressed, adjusting to hormones, a baby etc., is to be treated as 'normal' and goes places, touches things, and is touched by people who could end her life right there. The last thing a mother needs is sperm and anything at all going up there during healing, and during the time she's bonding with her child.*

*"And it also takes between 4 and 6 weeks for a woman's hormones to start to come back normal aka the hormonal spots on a baby. During that time, a mother's innate immune system is starting to come back to normal. For the first few weeks a mother can also be very susceptible to lung and other infections. The suppression of the Th1 immune system in order for the baby not to be miscarried in pregnancy, has to come back to normal, and that doesn't happen overnight.*

*"Think also, of what a temple was back then: A place where all sorts of animals were brought in, with all their excrement and blood of slaughter, on the altar and sprinkled. Do you think there were janitors with disinfectants wiping down all the surfaces obsessively? No. Lots of potentially dangerous microbes were all about, on surfaces, sandals, feet, hands and surely by virtue of touch make it to the penises, which the men handle to urinate. And while it is no danger to a person with intact mucus membranes, or to a man's penis, or to healthy persons, a woman with a freshly open uterus could be in big trouble and so could her infant.*

*"To me, this law is a God wanting to protect women and infants. The mother is not to touch something other people touch in case she transfers other people's bugs to her. She's not to go where unwashed people and animals have been—to protect her. She's being legitimately and graciously . . . allowed a relaxed calm lying-in time, at a time when sanitation didn't exist. We know how important this is, because in the 1600-1800s that's exactly the 'time' that mothers died from puerperal fever and other infections, because doctors didn't understand God's design, and the need to wash their own hands before dealing with a labouring woman. Neither did the doctors in the 16-1800s understand the need for separation of pregnant and post delivery mothers from corpses and the worst types of filth.*

*"So the last thing a woman needed in those days was to be forced to go INTO the temple where there are animals, birds, people, dirt, bugs etc. And frankly, men are pretty heartless sometimes, and I suspect without God*

*telling the men to back off, and making this a law, women would get a raw deal. So God lays down the law to men, so that a woman isn't forced to have sex or go places which put the raw unhealed lining of her uterus at risk. This law enabled a mother to rightfully stay at home quietly, without guilt, and NOT be poked and prodded, while the lining of her uterus healed and the cervix closed and any tears to the perineum healed. Women knew the law in those days. They were often enterprising, and just as intelligent and protective as women today.*

*“To me, this law is an indication of just how much God valued, loved and respected women, and wanted to protect them from what he knew men were capable of. How it could be interpreted any other way, beats me.*

*“When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, **she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting** a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. He shall offer them before the Lord to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood.’*

*“Note that: ‘the entrance to the tent’. She wasn’t even to go into the outer courtyard because God knew that was too filthy for a woman who had stopped bleeding but might still not be 100% healed.*

*“These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl. But if she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.’*

*“So God is asking the mother to go and buy the sacrifice herself, and to go to the entrance at the time where her bleeding has stopped and she is now at far less risk of infection. I guess if God had wanted to be really condescending he could have said that the man do it and leave the woman at home.”*

I had also said to Miriam, “I get the sense from the Bible that women were simply second-class citizens.” To which she replied:

*“You have difficulty with a virgin birth, and you think women were simply second-class citizens. Let’s look at Jesus’ mother Mary. Mary was a very bright cookie, and an independent thinker. She was a poor young girl, who did her very best to understand God.*

*“God chose her, because he needed a smart woman to be the mother of his son. The assignment for her was huge, and would stretch her understanding and faith to the limit.*

*“God knew that in order for Mary to understand the importance of her pregnancy, and how she needed to bring him up, He had to do two things: explain the deal to her, and get her permission. God sent his head honcho angel, Gabriel, to explain his plan to her, and ask Mary if she was prepared to carry the son of God. Mary then asked a raft of sensible thoughtful questions. In answering one of them, Gabriel told Mary that her elderly cousin Elizabeth, known as the barren one, was six months pregnant. Obviously that message had a lot more importance in it, than a throw away one liner.*

*“After answering Mary's questions, Gabriel had to wait for her agreement where she said, ‘let it be done to me according to what has been said’.*

*“Mary could have said no. She had a choice. Gabriel explained, and Mary accepted and agreed.*

*“Is this the action of a God who thinks women are second-class citizens who need their husbands' permission to think?*

*“At that time, the Jewish law dictated that a woman pregnant out of wedlock could have been stoned immediately when found to be pregnant. Mary was no dolt. She knew that. But she was smart enough to reckon that if God is polite enough to ask her, and tell her that the child would be born and become the saviour of Israel, then God had that law covered. Which meant she would live. To say yes under the law, took belief on her part in God, and not to look at what the law said.*

*“Then what is the next thing she does? She packed up and hurried to stay with her cousin Elizabeth for three months! And, Mary did NOT tell Joseph about Gabriel, or what he had said.*

*“Actually if you want to call anyone a ‘second-class citizen’ I wonder if Joseph sucked a lime later and said, ‘Why didn’t Gabriel come and ask me first?’ or ‘Don’t I have a sperm in this?’*

*“Why did Mary hurry to Elizabeth first, rather than talking to Joseph? Elizabeth’s husband had had an audience with Gabriel about seven months before, which didn’t go quite so well. Zacharias decided to argue with Gabriel, got in God’s dog-box and was made mute until the baby would be born.*

*Nevertheless Mary knew that Elizabeth and Zacharias would understand what her innermost worries were.*

*“Zacharias and Elizabeth were chosen to be parents to John the Baptist, because their hearts were in the right place with God, and Zacharias understood the significance of scripture. God knew that they would bring up John the Baptist well.*

*“When Elizabeth opened the door and saw Mary, the Holy Spirit straight away spoke through Elizabeth (a woman, no less!!!) verifying the words that Gabriel had said to her.*

*“What a relief that would have been. I wonder if Mary had worried all the way there, ‘What will these two say and think when they hear my story?’ Mary needed to hear that from Elizabeth. I would love to have been a fly on the wall listening to the conversations in that house for the next three months, because I bet most of it would have centred around God’s plan through the ages, and what was to come next for both Elizabeth and Mary.*

*“But more importantly for Mary, even if Zacharias couldn’t speak, as a temple priest he would be able to show her the scriptures she needed to fully understand what Gabriel had said, and the significance of scripture relating to Jesus’ future.*

*“Mary’s presence reinforced the words Gabriel said to Zacharias and Elizabeth, and strengthened their faith. Being with Zacharias and listening to Elizabeth, strengthened Mary’s faith and trust, so that she could face what was to come when she returned, and her blossoming belly would naturally raise questions.*

*“So here are two examples of where God does something without reference to a man. Gabriel speaks to Mary, before speaking to Joseph, and Elizabeth immediately speaks God’s word to Mary when she arrives, not Zacharias. So here are two very strong women, chosen directly by God, supporting one another. There is nothing second class about that.*

*“Then think of Jesus, and his huge respect for women through his life and ministry. Never once did he treat a woman as a second-class citizen. While cultural dolts might have, second-class citizenry was never part of God’s plan. It’s no fluke that after Jesus rose from the dead he appeared to women before appearing to any of the men. He spoke first to those who loved him with a heart belief and were . . . all women.*

*“Even earlier in the Old Testament, Abraham really loved and respected his wife Sarah. So did a lot of the OT men. Women bought, sold, traded and had things they did for God in their own right, without men being around.*

*“I believe that even in the Old Testament, women who were not airheads had as much respect and acumen as men did. Certainly, until Miriam spoke against Moses, she had great respect amongst Israel. After her racist outburst against Moses for marrying a black African woman, God temporarily struck her with leprosy as punishment, and her ministry was finished. Right there, that tells you what God thinks of colour discrimination!*

*“And there were other amazing OT women prophets, judges and lots of ordinary women like Ruth and Esther who we may never know about, who God deeply loved and honoured. Priscilla is one of many mentioned by name in the New Testament.*

*“Remember that the first four books of the New Testament are actually under the Old Testament law, so in God’s eyes, the New Testament begins, after Jesus rose again. If you read the Bible carefully, you will always find the answer to your question somewhere, because the Bible is a commentary on what happened in all countries, including Israel, when they turned away from God:*

*“We all have the ability to listen to voices, make our choices, and take our consequences. So you need to ask the Holy Spirit to explain it to you, instead of reading it with just your mind.”*