

Report on the narrative of the captivity and restoration of mrs. mary white rowla...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



Mary Rowlandson had a particularly difficult experience in maintaining her Puritanism and womanhood, as she was captured by Indians and lived with them for some time. Her experiences, as depicted in the narrative itself, directly challenge Puritan religious beliefs, as well as her understanding of her moral superiority over the Indians who capture her. Mary believes that God has a central role in her life, due to her Puritanism, and so she believes that there is a reason that she was attacked and captured. The book itself informs us of the Puritans' belief in the supremacy of God, particularly through Mary's examinations of her own faith and the way those beliefs are challenged during her captivity.

In the opening part of the narrative, when Lancaster is attacked by Indians, Mary Rowlandson immediately conveys just how harrowing and desperate the situation is: " It was a solemn sight to see so many Christians lying in their blood, some here and some there, like a company of sheep torn by wolves" (Rowlandson 6). Using the sheep/wolf metaphor to describe the Puritans being attacked by Indians, she paints her people clearly and cleanly on the side of good and moral righteousness; the attack was unprovoked, and performed by desperate, savage animals (the wolves). This allows her to dismiss the validity of the Indians' position by dehumanizing them, while also propping herself and her people up as God's chosen disciples.

Despite these issues, she maintained composure with the help of her faith: " Yet the Lord still shewed mercy to me, and helped me; and as he wounded me with one hand, so he healed me with the other" (Rowlandson 10).

Despite her unfortunate situation, Rowlandson shows us that Puritans are willing to have faith in their God that things will be okay. By meeting another

captive, Robert Pepper, she gains hope that she will survive (as he allows her to learn how to fix her wounds). Even though she is in a horrible situation, she still has faith that God will show her the way. In Puritan beliefs, this is consistent with the idea that God is in control of everything; to that end, God will show her out of her captivity (or at least teach her a valuable lesson during this experience).

Mary also looked to herself as a 'child in the wilderness,' who needed to abandon her fear and resolve to better her situation on her own terms; "There I left that Child in the Wilderness, and must commit it, and myself also in this Wilderness-condition, to him who is above all" (Rowlandson 11). This demonstrates her view of the American West as an unknown place which God will guide her through. By leaving her daughter in the wilderness, instead of giving her a proper Christian burial, Mary feels as though she let her child down. This also robs her of the kind of closure and communion with God that she needs in order to grieve. At the same time, she recognizes that she too is in unknown territory, and as a result must learn to thrive in that sense. The Puritans, including Mary, are cut off from all that they know, and must learn to fend for themselves. To that end, however, they do not feel further from God, but indeed closer - Mary notes that all she has is to commit to Him, placing her undying faith in God.

Mary Rowlandson, even in this patriarchal colonial era, endured and thrived in a seemingly impossible situation, with the help of her own guts and God being on her side. Her story is a perfect example of the Puritan belief in an active, loving and omnipresent God - this deity formally shapes events, good or bad, which is what Mary ends up believing. Mary's captivity and

experiences among the Indians were ordained by God, something that she will never forget for the rest of her life. Furthermore, they reaffirmed her faith in the Puritan God.

Works Cited

Rowlandson, Mary. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. Filiquarian Publishing, 2008. Print.