

Body Paragraph #3

good generalization to set up #

Another religious aspect of Rowlandson's Narrative is its idea of punishment. Typical of Puritan texts of the times, it subscribes to the religious belief that punishment is doled out by God in an effort to allow transgressors to atone for their iniquities. With the promise of spiritual redemption, God subjects sinners to tribulations so they can reflect on and then repent their transgressions. This privilege He reserves for the souls of His chosen flock. Surely this is Mrs. Rowlandson's mindset during the duration of her ordeal, beginning with the Indian attack on her village and her subsequent captivity. She refers to her abduction appropriately as a "trial" because it is her belief that this is God's way of testing her (311). Rowlandson's trials are the hardships that she has already endured, such as the loss of one child and the enslavement of two others, the death of her sister, and the ~~destruction~~ <sup>destruction</sup> of her community as she knew it, as well as her own captivity. Her guilt, presumed and never doubted, is established by virtue of her being punished. Although this is circular reasoning, to the Puritans, who firmly believed that all things happened as orchestrated by God, Divine intervention was the only plausible explanation as to why He would cause his people to suffer such atrocities. For Rowlandson this explanation simultaneously provided an answer and some consolation for her "afflictions" (312). Experiencing extreme adversity gave Mary the opportunity for self-examination. It is during this time of introspection, that Mary becomes acutely aware of the offenses that she has committed. <sup>she contemplates?</sup> How often had she let other concerns consume her and divert her attention from religious contemplation? Mary confesses, "how careless I had been of God's holy time; how many Sabbaths I had lost and misspent" evidence that she had allowed the daily drudgery of household chores such as preparing food, mending clothes, and keeping house, interfere with, indeed sometimes take precedence over religious duties (313). She was guilty of occasionally putting God on the back burner. Although to an outsider her offense seems quite trivial, to her it provided the

Bingo

- great

good

justification for her punishment (As strong as Mary's religious convictions were, they could have been stronger. <sup>Trans.?</sup> By sending her a Bible, albeit via a Satan-like savage, God equips her with the tools needed for survival. Described as being "we comfortable and suitable scriptures in my distress" (319), the Bible had literally become her "guide by day, and pillow by night" (326). Now, without distraction, religion took its proper place - front and center. The Bible became her lifeline, and its words, her impetus for survival. The readings gave her hope in a seemingly hopeless situation, a crutch to lean on when she needed encouragement or strength. <sup>the Puritan in her suggests</sup> (This is as it should have been all along. Until God's interference, she had mistakenly thought herself a good Christian. It was psychologically, emotionally, and physically more palatable for Mrs. Rowlandson as a Puritan to believe her punishment and deliverance were in the hands of a merciful God than to accept that her fate lay in the hands of "merciless heathens" (310). All the punishment she was made to bear, ~~she~~ <sup>she believed?</sup> believed was necessary so she could see the evil of her ways, repent, and therefore be returned redeemed, as it is written in the scriptures "...mercy promised again if we would return to Him by repentance..." (315).

good

yes

Why is it that most of us, even those whose belief in a Supreme Being is shaky, still call on a higher power in time of crisis, adversity or stress?

V. good question

Clear, logically, exhibits a solid grasp of the material & the readings.  
A+

### Works Cited

Rowlandson, Mary. A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson.

The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Vol. A. Eds. Nina Baym, *et al.* New

York: Norton, 2003. 309-340.