

All These Things Are Against Me

*“Joseph is not, Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.” – **Genesis 42:36***

Summary:

Jacob concluded that every circumstance was against him, although Joseph was alive, Simeon was safe, and Benjamin’s journey would bring deliverance. Believers often make the same mistake because their knowledge is incomplete, their present condition distorts their judgment, or they decide before God’s work is finished. Faith rests in God’s promises, perfections, and past faithfulness—especially as revealed at the cross—until providence is fully explained.

Outline:

1. **A sorrowful but mistaken conclusion**

- Every part of Jacob’s complaint was contradicted by realities he could not yet see.

2. **The limits of human judgment**

- Physical weakness, incomplete knowledge, and present feelings can distort our view of events.

3. **Appearances are not the final reality**

- Losses may become instruments of deliverance, while desired circumstances may bring sorrow.

4. **The danger of judging prematurely**

- God's work must not be condemned before its purpose and outcome have been revealed.

5. **Faith while explanations are withheld**

- Believers find rest by trusting God's promises, character, former works, and the cross of Christ.

Text

This conclusion was filled with sorrow, but none of it was based on truth. "Joseph is not"—yet he is, alive and riding in Egypt's second chariot. "And Simeon is not"—but he is, held temporarily as a hostage until his brothers return. "And ye will take Benjamin away"—yes, but not to harm him, rather to confirm him as a deliverer and to bring about a positive outcome. Let the boy go, and no harm will come to him; supplies for you and your family will soon arrive, and the wagons sent by Joseph will carry you all to Goshen, where he will support you.

Now, what do you say, Jacob? "I have only spoken once and will not continue. I've heard of you in words, but now I see you with my own eyes; therefore, I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes. I was as foolish and ignorant as a beast before you. Yet, I am always with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. You will guide me with your counsel and welcome me into glory. All your ways are just and true, O King of saints!—He has done all things well." The inference here so groundlessly drawn is not peculiar to Jacob. Nothing is more common than to hear the subjects of Divine grace exclaim, "All these things are against me," when yet "all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth;" and "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Whence does it proceed? Sometimes they judge under a morbid physical influence. We are not only fearfully, but wonderfully made; and there are many things which would hardly appear credible were they not confirmed by frequent experience.

How changes in weather influence not just our emotions but also our perceptions! Some people are deeply to be pitied for their constant suffering from physical causes. They perceive everything through a damaged lens; often, they are convinced that the tinges on the glass are the true colours of objects. Their

errors frequently stem from a lack of understanding about the subject itself. It's often difficult to discern what is beneficial or harmful for us. As the saying goes, "Who knoweth what is good for a man in this life?"

Can we truly differentiate between appearances and realities? Between the start and the conclusion of events? Are we fully aware of ourselves? Do we understand what effects untested experiences might have on our minds or circumstances? We move into the future with our current perspectives and emotions, without considering that different events might alter our views and feelings. Circumstances could transform us into entirely new beings, who, if shown to us in advance, would provoke more than just wonder.

Hazael hated in his mind what he had become in reality, transitioning from a private to a public role. Similarly, Lot suffered great miseries by choosing the Sodom valley, despite its lushness as the Lord's garden. Conversely, Ruth lost her husband early and was reduced to gleaning, yet she found Boaz in the fields and eventually became the ancestor of the Messiah.

A man wanted to sail on a specific ship but was very disappointed when he arrived and saw it had already sailed. The following day, the ship was wrecked, transforming his disappointment into joy. This illustrates how, because we are earthly beings, we often prioritize comfort and pleasure over spiritual growth.

If the thorns hedge our way to prevent us from straying, if bodily illness guards the soul's health, and if losing a creature brings us closer to God—then surely these are not against us. Rather, they serve our benefit, and recognizing this is wise for salvation, guiding our thoughts towards heaven. We also err

when we judge too early, for "He that believeth maketh not haste."

If a man commits to completing a great task in ten years, would it be fair to judge it after only ten days or ten weeks? God did not pass judgment on his creation until it was finished: "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good." The final outcome will not only bring all to a close but also clarify everything, offering both satisfaction and praise. Therefore, do not judge prematurely—until the Lord comes. The Lord's coming is near, and blessed are those who wait for him.

Meanwhile, a substitute for explanations of heaven is to walk by faith in the absence of sight. If you do not believe, you will not be established. Yet, by faith, we find rest and the peace of God—beyond understanding—that guards our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Under this faith, consider his promises, reflect on his perfections, and recall his ancient wonders; above all, stay close to the cross. Our discouragements and confusions stem from leaving this behind.

God forbid we boast in anything else! It not only grants all believers access to heaven but also unlocks understanding of God's plans. If God is for us, who can stand against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all—how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us everything else? God of love! You shall be the source of our utmost confidence—"Our cares, we cast to the wind and shake off like dust; we truly trust our everything to Him in whom our souls trust."

This sermon is taken from William Jay's devotional, *Morning and Evening Exercises* (January 4, Evening), first published in 1854.