

It is pronounced kol in Hebrew, pas in Greek, omnis in Latin, alles in German, todos in Spanish, and all-ya'll in Texan. It is the most superlative word in any language. What is it? A-L-L, all. Its siblings include total, complete, entire, and everything. Country cousins are called the whole hog, the whole shebang, the whole enchilada, and the whole ball of wax.

All. It is the most superlative word for the most superlative section in the Old Testament, the Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah. He had it all. Our text in Isaiah 52:13 states, "See, My servant will act wisely; He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted." The Hebrew verbs translated "raised" and "lifted up" are used to describe only one other person in Isaiah, and that is the King the prophet sees in 6:1: "In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne high and lifted up." This Lord receives the cry of the seraphim in verse 3, "Holy, holy, holy." In verse 5 the prophet calls Him, "the King, the Lord of armies." The Servant and the Lord are one and the same. This is a mystery not fully articulated until Jesus says in John 10:30, "I and the Father are one." This Servant had it all.

He would need it, because the Fourth Servant Song--composed by Isaiah of Jerusalem in the eighth century--was originally intended for sixth century exiles who were singing another song, Psalm 137:4, "How can we

sing the songs of Zion while in a foreign land?” They were there because of their addiction to sin.

Many years ago, a scientist did an experiment where he made cocaine available to monkeys. They would pull a lever and the feeding tray would give them a hit of cocaine. Soon the monkeys got addicted to the coke. These were happy monkeys! But then the scientist began to hold the next fix. How many consecutive times do you think the average monkey would pull that lever to get the next fix? 12,800 times. Can you imagine these monkeys hitting the lever over and over and over and over again? “I’ve got to have it. I’ve got to have it!”

In like manner, we are also addicted to sin. We become fixated on gossip, anger, worry, laziness, excuses, and selfishness. Then we find ourselves exiled, in bondage, and stuck. We hit the lever over and over and over and over again. “I’ve got to have it. I’ve got to have it!” And the result? We join Israel singing our depressing, deadly dirge, “How can we sing the songs of Zion while in a foreign land?”

To such captives, Isaiah sings a different song, “See, My servant will act wisely; He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted” (52:13). He had it all. Colossians 2:9, “For in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in

bodily form.” Hebrews 1:3, “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being.”

Jesus is not an assistant to the Father. He is not the vice president of the cosmos, a sort-of Kamala Harris of the universe. Jesus is not a junior partner to the Father. No. He is a full-fledged member of the Godhead, equal with the Father in every way, from eternity past. The Nicene Creed describes Jesus with these words: “Being of one substance with the Father.” This Servant had it all.

This Servant gave it all. Isaiah 53 continues with these words. “He was stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted . . . pierced . . . crushed . . . punished . . . led like a lamb to the slaughter . . . cut off from the land of the living . . . assigned a grave with the wicked.” That is why in 52:14 the prophet writes, “Many were appalled at Him, His appearance was disfigured beyond that of any man.” This Servant gave it all; every last drop of blood.

This Servant delivers it all. Isaiah 53:11 states, “By His knowledge My righteous servant will justify many.” The Servant delivers what captives need most: forgiveness. Forgiveness is at the heart of Isaiah’s own experience. He writes in 6:6-7, “Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my

mouth and said, 'See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.'"

From the altar called Calvary, our God touches us with blood-bought forgiveness. The absolution declares it. The font seals it. The table celebrates it. Paul maintains this in Philippians 4:19 when he writes, "And my God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus." All, total, complete, everything, the whole enchilada, the whole ball of wax. He had it. He gave it. He delivers it, because it is part of the plan.

Isaiah 53:10 states that it was God's will. Good Friday is not just a moving tragedy. It was not a stopgap measure. Nor was it the Father's unexpected knee-jerk response to a world plummeting towards destruction. It was God's will. The cross was drawn into the original blueprint, written into the first script. Golgotha is the decisive plan of the Father before the creation of the world.

What does it mean? It means Jesus intentionally planted the tree from which His cross would be carved. It means He voluntarily placed Judas into the womb of a woman. It means He was the One who set in motion the political machinery that sent Pilate to Judea and Herod to Jerusalem. And it means He did not have to do it, but He did it all for you!

Your depressing, deadly dirge knows only bondage, captivity, and addiction. “How can we sing the songs of Zion while in a foreign land?” This is trumped in Isaiah’s song that imparts forgiveness, freedom, and divine mercy. When the words of the Fourth Servant Song enter your ears and strike your hearts, you cannot help but respond with the words of one more song, written not by Isaiah but by Isaac Watts: “Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a tribute far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all!” (LSB 425:4). Amen.