

The Worm That Never Dies

The Tôlâ' [תולע] or Tôlê'âh Worm [תולעה] (H8438 or H4839 – depending upon which scroll is used)

The Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh worm is the female 'Coccus Illicis' worm which the Hebrews used to make the red dye used in the coverings of the Tabernacle and the clothes of the priests.

H8438 תולע Tôlâ' or תולעה Tôlê'âh are defined as:

- the crimson-grub, used for the color from it, and cloths dyed therewith

The Tôlâ' worm is known as the Crimson Worm because of this color.

Job 25:6 – “How much less man, that is a worm ^[H7415] and the son of man, which is a worm ^[H8438].”

Psalm 22:6 – “But I am a worm [H8438] and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. 'He trusts in Yahweh,' they say, 'Let Yahweh rescue him. Let him deliver Him, since He delights in Him'.”

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Isaiah 66:23-24 – “Every month on Rosh-Hodesh and every week on Shabbat, everyone living will come to worship in my presence, says Yahweh. As they leave, they will look on the corpses of the people who rebelled against me. For their worm [H8438] will never die, and their fire will never be quenched; but they will be abhorrent to all humanity.”

All translations in the Newer Covenant scriptures contain **Mark 9:48** – “Where their worm ^[G4663] never dies and their fire is never quenched” which quotes Isaiah 66:24, but oddly enough the Hebrew word Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh is translated into the Greek word skolēx ^[G4663] which is a completely different Hebrew word; rimmâh ^[H7415].

G4663 σκώληξ skolēx and/or **H7415** רממה rimmâh are defined as:

- a grub, maggot or earth-worm. Specifically a worm that preys upon dead bodies.

Some manuscripts such as those used by the KJV HCSB, HNV, ISV, WEB, and YLT include **Mark 9:44 and 9:46** – “Where the worm ^[G4663] does not die, and the fire is not quenched” (a quote from **Isaiah 66:24**). **Verses 44 and 46 (which are identical with verse 48) are lacking in the best ancient authorities!**

The Typical Explanations

Isaiah 66:24 – “As they leave, they will look on the corpses of the people who rebelled against me. For their worm ^[H8438] will never die, and their fire will never be quenched; but they will be abhorrent to all humanity.”

Numerous explanations have been given for this verse which basically say: “the worm refers to a man's conscience and their guilty conscience gnaws away at him with remorse that cannot be alleviated.” This, they claim, is Yeshua's teaching that there is unending suffering in hell – the worm (conscience) never stops causing torment.

The whole point, they say, is hell is the result of unrepentant sin and is absolute and permanent. Others replace the word conscience with soul. The “sins of the soul attack the mind and the senses of the guilty, and gnaw at the entrails of his conscience” say several pontificators. **Oi Vey.**

The typical explanations are also frequently linked to Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom, which is located outside Jerusalem. Trash, refuse, dead animals, and even dead bodies of criminals were thrown into Gehenna to be destroyed by the fires that constantly burned there.

Any body that isn't burned, is devoured by maggots, they say. This, they claim, is Yeshua's teaching that whatever was thrown into the valley never came out again; it was totally consumed, either by fire or by worms or maggots, and so will whatever or whoever is thrown into the Lake of Fire. **Again, I say, Oi Vey!**

Yet others point out that maggots can't exist in the presence of fire – thus the meaning of the word worm or skolēx is clearly symbolic. **Oi Vey! Oi Vey! Oi Vey!**

The Biblical Explanation

Isaiah 66:23-24 – “*As they (the living) leave, they will look on the corpses of the people who rebelled against me. For the worm ^[H8438] (of the people who rebelled) will never die, and their fire will never be quenched.*”

Isaiah 66:24 clearly uses the Hebrew word Tôlâ’ [H8438], NOT the Hebrew word rimmâh [H7415]! This is the same word that Yeshua uses to describe himself. Yeshua is the Crimson Worm that dies to give life to its children.

This is stated many times in many different ways:

- **Deuteronomy 4:35** – “Yahweh is Elohim; besides him there is no other.”
- **Deuteronomy 4:39** – “Yahweh is Elohim in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.”
- **1 Kings 8:60** – “To you it was shown, that you might know that Yahweh is Elohim; there is no other besides him.”
- **Isaiah 43:11** – “I, even I, am Yahweh, and apart from me there is no savior.”
- **Isaiah 45:21** – “There is no Elohim apart from me, a righteous El and a Savior; there is none but me.”
- **John 14:6** – “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.”
- **Acts 4:12** – “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”
- **John 10:9** – “So all the peoples of the earth may know that Yahweh is Elohim and that there is no other.”

The Unquenchable, Eternal Fire

The unquenchable, eternal fire is also portrayed in several ways and was specifically created for the devil and his angels, in other words, to those little “g” gods, according to Matthew, Paul, and John:

- **Matthew 25:41** – “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”
- **Matthew 25:46** – “These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”
- **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** – “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them . . . who will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”
- **Revelation 20:10** – “The devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Isaiah 66-24 clearly states that this tôlâ’ worm does not die. The tôlâ’ worm this verse references is the tôlâ’ of the rebellious, unbelieving, and unrepentant – in other words this tôlâ’ worm references all those little “g” gods in whom people have trusted and worshiped rather than Yeshua.

Those little “g” gods never rise again from death, and never give their lives to save another – just the opposite – they expect their worshipers to die for them!

The devil and those little “g” gods will be tormented day and night forever, for all eternity – their fire will never be quenched.

Mondo Gonzales, Host of Prophecy Watchers says: “*This interpretation certainly takes all the relevant passages and presents a more consistently theological view than others.*”

Conclusions

- Yeshua is **THE** Tôlâ’ or Tôlê’âh worm who dies for the salvation of those who believe in him. **There is no other.**
- Scripture states that the Tôlâ’ worm of the rebellious, unbelieving, and unrepentant – in other words the little “g” gods that the rebellious believe in – will never die.
- The little “g” gods will not die for their worshippers to give them any kind of salvation!
- The fire of the little “g” gods will never be quenched.