

Yeshua Ha'Mashiach and The Incredible Crimson Tôlâ' Worm, The Trees, The Green Tree, and The Hanging Tree

Worms and Maggots

“But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

There Are Two Hebrew Words For “Worm”:

1. **H8438 tôlâ'**, tôlê'âh, tôla'ath, tôla'ath, *a crimson worm*
2. **H7415 rimmâh**, *a maggot*

The Tôlâ' Worm [תולע' tôlâ'] and [תולעת' tôlê'âh, תולעת' tôla'ath, תלעת' tôla'ath]
(H8438 or H4839 – depending upon which scroll is used)

- I. worm, scarlet stuff, crimson
 - A. worm – the female 'coccus ilicis'
 - B. scarlet stuff, crimson, scarlet
 - i. the dye made from the dried body of the female of the worm “coccus ilicis”
- II. worm, maggot
 - A. worm, grub
 - B. the worm “coccus ilicis”

The Yeshua Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh Worm ^{H8438}

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 no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.”

Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34 – Yeshua quotes from **Psalm 22** while being crucified.

The Ya'âqôb Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh Worm

Isaiah 41:14 – “Do not fear, you **worm** ^{H8438} Jacob, you men of Israel; I will help you,” declares Yahweh.”

The Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh Worm That Will Not Die

Isaiah 66:24 – “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their **worm** ^{H8438} shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.”

The Tôlâ' or Tôlê'âh Worm That Kills Plants

Jonah 4:7 – “But when dawn came up the next day, Yahweh appointed a **worm** ^{H8438} that attacked the bush, so that it withered.”

The Rimmâh Worm or Maggot [רמה H7415]

- I. maggot, worm (as cause and sign of decay)
 - A. maggot (as rapidly bred), literally or figuratively:—worm
 - B. A grub, maggot or earth-worm. Specifically a worm that preys upon dead bodies

Job 7:5 – “My flesh is clothed with **worms** ^{H7415} and clods of dust; my skin is broken, and become loathsome.”

Job 21:26 – “They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms ^{H7415} shall cover them.”

Job 24:20 – “The womb shall forget him; the **worm** ^{H7415} shall feed sweetly on him; he shall be no more remembered; and wickedness shall be broken as a tree.”

Job 25:6 – “How much less man, that is a **worm** ^{H7415}? and the son of man, which is a **worm** ^{H8438}?”

The Greek Skōlēx Worm or Maggot [σκώληξ G4663] and skōlēkobrōtos [G4662 σκωληκόβρωτος; from G4663]

I. a worm, specifically that kind which preys upon dead bodies

A. a grub, maggot or earth-worm:—worm.

Mark 9:44 – “Where their worm ^{G4663} dies not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Mark 9:46 – “Where their worm ^{G4663} dies not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Mark 9:48 – “Where their worm ^{G4663} dies not, and the fire is not quenched.”

Acts 12:23 – “Because Herod did not give the glory to God, an angel of Yahweh immediately caused him to become sick, and he was eaten by worms ^{G4662} and died.”

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 Tōlâ’ or Tōlē’âh is translated into the Greek word skolēx ^[G4663] which is a completely different Hebrew word; rimmâh ^[H7415].



The female tola'ah attached to a branch.

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The Prophecy of the Messiah

Psalm 22 – “But I am a **worm** (tōlē’âh 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!’”

What does a little worm have to do with Yeshua, Calvary, and Yahweh’s plan for Salvation? Let’s find out:

Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34 – “At about three, Yeshua uttered a loud cry, “*Eli! Eli! L’mah sh’vaktani?*” This utterance means My God! My God! Why have you deserted me?

Psalm 22 is a prophecy of the Messiah which Yeshua quoted while being crucified. In Psalm 22 we see that the Messiah is called a “**worm**”. In Hebrew this is the **Tolē’âh** ^{H8438} worm; in Latin the “Coccus Ilicis”; in Arabic “Kirmizi”; and in English, Crimson. This worm climbs into the Hermes Oak and gives its life so that its children can live; staining the tree red for three days.

When the female Tolâ is ready to lay her eggs she climbs into her preferred Hermes Oak tree, attaches herself to the tree, and builds a hard red shell around herself.



Freshly gathered tola'ot. The red "filling" are the eggs.

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She then lays her eggs inside this crimson shell, and keeps the eggs under her body to protect them.

After hatching the baby worms feed on the body of the mother for three days, during which the mother worm oozes a bright crimson red fluid.

This red fluid covers and permanently stains the young worms, as well as staining the tree to which the mother worm is attached.

Isaiah 1:18 “Come now, and let us reason together, says Yahweh: though your sins be as scarlet [shânîy] they shall be as white as snow [sheleg]; though they be red like crimson [tolâ], they shall be white as wool [tsemer].”

After three days the young worms are ready to leave the shell. The mother is still attached to the shell and to the tree and she dies so that she can birth a family.



A magnified photograph of the tola'at shani.
(photograph courtesy of Zohar Amar)

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On day four the mother worm's tail pulls up to her head into a heart shape, and the heart shaped body turns into a white wax.

The wax looks like a little patch of wool on the side of the tree and begins to flake off and drop to the ground like a patch of white snow.

Isaiah 53:5 – *“He was wounded for our transgressions, he was beaten for our iniquities: the punishment for our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”*

Hebrews 9:13-14 – *“If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Yeshua purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”*

The word “finished” in the original Greek means “paid in full”. “We owed a debt we could never pay”. Yeshua “paid a debt he didn't owe” for us. Sin no longer has dominion over us if we accept his sacrifice for us (**Romans 6:14**).

Hebrews 9:22 *“And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”*

- The mother Crimson worm willingly climbs onto a tree to die to birth a family.
- Yeshua willingly went to the cross to die so that we can live eternally with Him as His family.
- The baby worms are covered with the red fluid of the dying mother worm.
- We are covered with the red blood of Yeshua and are washed as white as snow.

Worms and Maggots Conclusions

Psalms 22:6 – *“But I am a Tolê'âh, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised.”*

- The coccus ilicis is the Tolê'âh worm of Psalm 22 that Yeshua identifies with while being crucified.
- The coccus ilicis is the Tolê'âh worm that gives its life to give life to its children
- The coccus ilicis is the Tolê'âh worm that cleanses and covers its children, just as we are covered with the red blood of Yeshua and are washed as white as snow.
- The coccus ilicis is the Tolê'âh worm spoken of in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers which was used to dye the yarn and cloth found in the Wilderness Tabernacle.

The Color Scarlet

Scarlet in Hebrew

Scarlet –Shânîy [שָׁנִי H8144]

- I. crimson:—properly the insect or its color
- II. stuff dyed with it:—crimson, scarlet (thread)

Exodus 26:1, 31, 36 – *“Moreover thou shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and **scarlet**^{H8144}: with cherubim of cunning work shall thou make them. ... And thou shall make a veil of blue, and purple, and **scarlet**^{H8144}, and fine twined linen of cunning work: with cherubim shall it be made: ... And thou shall make an hanging for the door of the tent, of blue, and purple, and **scarlet**^{H8144}, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework.”*

Exodus 27:16 – *“And for the gate of the court shall be an hanging of twenty cubits, of blue, and purple, and **scarlet**^{H8144}, and fine twined linen, wrought with needlework: and their pillars shall be four, and their sockets four.”*

Leviticus 14:52 – *“And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the **scarlet**^{H8144} string.”*

Isaiah 1:18 – “Come now, and let us reason together, says Yahweh: though your sins be as **scarlet**^{H8144}, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

Scarlet in Greek

Crimson – Kokkinos [κόκκινος G2847] from [κόκκος G2848]

I. crimson colored:—scarlet

Matthew 27:14 – “They stripped Him and put a **scarlet**^{G2847} robe on Him.”

Matthew 27:31 – “After mocking him, they stripped him of the **scarlet**^{G2847} robe and put his own clothes on him.”

Hebrews 9:19 – “When Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and **scarlet**^{G2847} wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people.”

Revelation 17:3-4 “And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a **scarlet**^{G2847} beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. The woman was clothed in purple and **scarlet**^{G2847}.”

The Uses of the Coccus Ilicis

The crushed coccus ilicis contains a chemical that is an anti-bacterial agent which is why it was used in two types of purification ceremonies:

1. When there was a plague, scarlet was included in the purification of the house. “And he shall cleanse the house with the blood of the bird, and with the running water, and with the living bird, and with the cedar wood, and with the hyssop, and with the scarlet.” (**Leviticus 14:52**).
2. The scarlet worm was also used in the formula with the ashes of the red heifer. “And the priest shall take cedar wood, and hyssop, and scarlet, and cast it into the midst of the burning of the heifer.” (**Leviticus 19:6**). These ashes were used to cleanse a person when they came into contact with a dead body (a host for bacteria). This crimson or scarlet item, the worm coccus ilicis, was necessary to make one clean, which is symbolic of the blood of Yeshua removing the sin of disease and death from us.

The coccus ilicis was also essential to the building of the Wilderness Tabernacle:

1. The tabernacle curtains and coverings were woven from threads dyed scarlet by the secretions of the tolâ worm: “You are to make the tabernacle with ten sheets of finely woven linen and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with a design of cherubim worked into them” (**Exodus 26:1**).
2. The words used for scarlet in this verse and many other verses in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are tolâ and shânîy!



A sample of wool previously dyed by Professor Amar, using the tola'at shani.
(photo courtesy of Zohar Amar) TheTempleInstitute.org

The Trees

Psalm 96:11-13 – *“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the **trees** of the forest will sing for joy before Yahweh, for He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.”*

Scripture uses many Hebrew idioms that are symbolic of other things.

- The Sea and the Land are almost identical to the Heavens and the Earth – which often symbolize nations and their peoples
- Stars symbolize heavenly beings: angels and fallen angels
- Trees frequently symbolize human beings

Understanding Hebrew idioms helps us to better understand the scriptures. Today we look at the usage of the “trees” idioms:

- the Green Tree is Yeshua Ha’Mashiach
- but the Dry Tree is the wicked, unbelieving person

The Green Tree

Luke 23:31 – *“For if they do these things **to** the greenG5200 tree, what shall be done **to** the dryG3584 tree”*

Most translations state this verse as: *“For if they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?”* The King James states it this way: *“For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?”* The Hebrew is very explicit and the actions taken are done **TO**, not **“in”** or **“when”**.

The key to proper interpretation of this verse is that the phrases “green tree” and “dry tree” are Hebrew idioms, and the actions taken against either of these trees can only be done **to** the tree, not in the tree or when the tree is in a particular condition. Here’s why:

- The Green Tree is a messianic title that applies to Yeshua – the only one who is righteous.
- The Green Tree is an idiom for a righteous person, i.e. a person who has salvation in Yeshua and who has been given his righteousness.
- The Dry Tree represents the wicked, unbelieving individual.

Ezekiel 20:47 – *“Say to the Negev forest: ‘Hear the word of Yahweh. Yahweh Elohim says, “I will light a fire in you; it will devour every tree in you, green and dry alike; a blazing, unquenchable flame that will scorch every face from the Negev to the north.”*

In Ezekiel 20:47 thru 21:7, Ezekiel quotes Yahweh who is speaking to the Negev forest – another name (Hebrew idiom) for Israel! Yahweh says: *“I will light a fire in you; it will devour every tree in you, green and dry alike; a blazing, unquenchable flame that will scorch every face . . . I will draw My sword from its sheath and cut off both the righteous and the wicked from you.”*

This is a prophecy about Israel whose first part was achieved at the time of Yeshua’s crucifixion, and whose second part was completed at the Diaspora of the Jews when they were dispersed to all of the nations of the world.

Ezekiel 21:6-7 – *“Therefore, human being, groan! Groan bitterly, as if your heart would break, as they watch. Then, when they ask you, ‘Why are you groaning?’ you will answer, ‘Because of the news, because it’s coming. All hearts will melt, all hands hang limp, all spirits faint and all knees turn to water; here, it’s coming, it will happen,’ says Yahweh Elohim.”*

Verses **21:6-7** tell Ezekiel to groan bitterly for what is coming:

Yeshua, as he made his way to his crucifixion tells those following him not to cry (groan bitterly) for himself, but for themselves and their children (**Luke 23:27-28**). Yeshua then plainly asks the followers: *“If they will do this to me, what will they do to you?”* (**Luke 23:31**). He knows that the prophecy of **Ezekiel 20:47 – 21:7** is in the process of being fulfilled.

The Hanging Tree

The Tav

The word translated tree in Deuteronomy is the Hebrew word ets [עץ H6086] and in Galatians is the Greek word xylon [ξύλον G3586].

Some say that the cross was in the shape of a lower case “t” (or plus sign +), which is the way the tav [ת] was written in ancient Hebrew. Others say the cross upon which Yeshua was hung was in the shape of an upper case “T”. Both styles were used.

The Cross

Deuteronomy 21:22 – “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, you hang him on a *tree*.”

Galatians 3:13 – “Yeshua has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a *tree*.”

The first Adam lost everything at the foot of the *Tree Of The Knowledge Of Good And Evil* in the Garden of Eden. Today, Christians speak of leaving their sins at the foot of the cross upon which Yeshua was crucified.

A traditional cross was rarely two wooden posts nailed together, as shown in most churches today, but was most often an olive tree upon which a crossbeam was attached, as required by both **Deuteronomy 21:22** and **Galatians 3:13**. In **Romans 11:17-24**, Paul compares Israel to an olive tree. He says the Jews are as the natural branches of the olive tree, and the Gentiles as wild branches. Yeshua, a natural branch (**Isaiah 11:1-2**), is hung on an olive tree!

Ezekiel 9:4 – “And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a *mark* upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof.”

In the passage above, the word translated mark [תָּבַעַת H8420] is the Hebrew word tav.

A similar marking is noted in **Revelation 7:3** – “Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have *sealed* the servants of our God in their foreheads.” The word translated sealed is the Greek word sphragizo [σφραγίζω G4972], which means to mark. In Hebrew it would be the word tav [תָּבַעַת H8420]. The tav denotes a mark, sign, or cross, and in ancient Rabbinical tradition the Tav is known as the *Seal of God* and also the *Seal of Truth*. Yeshua is referred to as the aleph-tav [אָתָּבָה], and he is the truth. On the cross, Yeshua sealed our eternal salvation with his blood.

The Mercy Seat

Romans 3:25 – “Yahweh has set forth Yeshua to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”

A small wedge was generally placed on the tree just below the feet of the person being crucified. This wedge allowed the person to relieve the pressure on their arms, thus making breathing a tad easier, and was called the mercy seat! The word propitiation, used in **Romans 3:25** is the word hilastērion [ἱλαστήριον G2435], which literally means: the cover of the ark of the covenant in the Holy of Holies. In other words: the mercy seat.

The Heel

Genesis 3:15 – “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring. He will bruise your head, and you will bruise his heel.”

Romans 16:20 – “And the God of shalom will quickly crush Satan under your feet.”

In the third chapter of **Genesis**, Yahweh prophesies that Satan will bruise the heel of Yeshua. This prophecy was fulfilled during the crucifixion as Yeshua hung on the cross.

When a person’s heels were nailed to the tree, a small piece of acacia wood was placed on the outside of each heel. The nail was then driven through the acacia, through the heel, and into the olive tree.

Interesting that all of the furniture in the Tabernacle was constructed of acacia wood, or as it was called in the Older Covenant scriptures, shittim wood [שִׁטִּים H7848] (**Exodus 25:10** and **37:1**).

The Outstretched Arms

Mark 15:27 – “*They crucified two robbers with Him, one on His right and one on His left.*”

1 Corinthians 1:22 – “*For indeed Jews ask for signs and Greeks search for wisdom.*”

As Yeshua is hanging on the tree (cross), his outstretched arms and his hands are pointing to two robbers, one on his right, and another on his left.

One of the robbers wants Yeshua to prove he is the Mashiach by saving himself and both robbers (**Luke 23:39**). The second robber, using his wits (in other words, his wisdom), tells the first robber that they both deserve their punishment and asks Yeshua to remember him when he comes into his kingdom (**Luke 23:40-42**).

Yeshua's outstretched hands can be seen as an offer of salvation to both robbers. Looking once again to Paul's comparisons in **Romans 11:1-36**, is it possible that one of the robbers was a Jewish man from Jerusalem, and the other robber a Greek or Gentile man from Galilee?

Quite likely, for Paul tells us that the natural branches have rejected Yeshua's offer but the Gentiles have accepted it. Even agricultural observations of that time tell us that the natural olive trees grew in Jerusalem but the wild olive trees grew in Galilee!

Trees Conclusions

Exodus 25:22 – “*I will meet with you, from above the mercy seat.*”

Yeshua is our mercy seat. Satan bruised his heel upon the cross, but his resurrection has crushed Satan's head. Yeshua's outstretched arms ask us the same question he posed to the two robbers: “*Will you follow me?*” Who will you be: a person who has rejected his offer, or one who has accepted his offer and been given eternal life.

The choice is yours. Choose wisely.

Ezekiel 17:24 – “*Then all the trees of the field will know that I, Yahweh, bring down the tall tree and raise up the low tree, dry up the green tree and make the dry tree bear fruit. I, Yahweh, have spoken; and I will do it'.*”

Matthew 13:23 – “*The person who hears the message and understands it will surely bear fruit.*”

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- The Stars are heavenly beings: angels and fallen angels.
- The Trees are all human beings,
- The Green Tree is Yeshua Ha'Mashiach
- The Dry Tree is the wicked, unbelieving person.

Yeshua, the Green Tree, was “dried up”. Crucified, died, buried. And the dry tree, every individual who has been given salvation and who has been given his righteousness, is now bearing fruit to the glory of Yahweh and Yeshua (**Matthew 13:23, Mark 4:20, John 15:2-8, Romans 7:4**).