

# Psalm 22:6-I Am a Worm

## A WORM AND NOT A MAN

### Psalm 22:6

#### A Witness to Redemption in Nature

**A WORM AND NOT A MAN** - Psalm 22 is often called the "Crucifixion Psalm" or "The Psalm of the Cross" and is clearly a Messianic psalm giving a detailed prophetic description of our Lord's crucifixion almost 1000 years before the actual event. Spurgeon writes "For plaintive expressions uprising from unutterable depths of woe we may say of this psalm, "there is none like it." It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of His dying words, the lachrymatory (containers used in Roman tombs to collect funeral tears) of His last tears, the memorial of His expiring joys. Before us in Psalm 22 we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the Cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow (Heb 2:9). Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read Psalm 22:1-31 reverently, removing the sandals from our feet, as Jehovah instructed Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:5), for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this Psalm." "And can it be that I should gain, An interest in the Savior's blood? Died He for me, who caused His pain—For me, who Him to death pursued? Amazing love! How can it be, That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" (C Wesley)

Matthew and Mark both quote from Psalm 22:1 as they record Jesus' cry of anguish "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt 27:46, Mk 15:34). In verse 6 we encounter a most unusual description of Messiah - "I am a WORM and not a man." While there is no record of Christ uttering these words on the Cross, there is little doubt that these words were on the heart of our Lord. As Jon Courson says "Great is the mystery (of godliness) that God became a man (1Timothy 3:16). But greater still is the mystery that the MAN became a LAMB (Jn 1:29) and the LAMB became a WORM to save you and me!" As Spurgeon says Psalm 22:6 "is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory (1Cor 2:8) be brought to such abasement as to be not only "made for a little while lower than the angels" (Heb 2:9), but even lower than men? What a contrast between "I AM" (Jn 8:24, 28, 58) and "I AM A WORM"! Yet such a double nature was found in the Person of our Lord Jesus when bleeding upon the tree. He felt Himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden WORM, passive while "crushed for our iniquities," (Isa 53:5), and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon Him. "He was despised and forsaken of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and like one from Whom men hide their face. He was despised (disdained, held in contempt), and we did not esteem Him (Literally, "we estimated Him as nothing")." (Isaiah 53:3) He selects a WORM the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might, except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of Himself when His body and soul had become a mass of misery—the very essence of agony—in the dying pangs of Crucifixion. Man by nature is but a WORM (Job 25:6, Isaiah 41:14); but our Lord Jesus puts Himself even beneath man (Php 2:7-8), on account of the scorn that was heaped upon Him and the weakness which He felt, and therefore He adds, "and not a man!" Indeed, as William Cowper wrote, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform!"

Spurgeon goes on to observe that "There is a LITTLE RED WORM which seems to be nothing else but BLOOD when it is crushed, it seems all gone except a blood-stain; and the Saviour, in the deep humiliation of His spirit, compares Himself to that little red worm. How true it is that "He made himself of no reputation" (Php 2:7KJV) for our sakes! He emptied Himself of all His glory; and if there be any glory natural to manhood, He emptied himself even of that. Not only the glories of His Godhead, but the honors of His manhood He laid aside that we might come to "know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." (2Cor 8:9) "Were the whole realm of nature mine, That were a present far too small; Love so amazing, so divine, Demands my soul, my life, my all." (Isaac Watts)

Warren Wiersbe adds that Psalm 22:6 is surely a description that applies "to our Savior. **I am a worm and not a man**" is a **forgotten "I AM" statement** that speaks of how little value the leaders of Israel and the Roman officials placed on Jesus of Nazareth. A WORM is a creature of the ground, helpless, frail, and unwanted. Isaiah 52:14NIV predicted that Messiah would be terribly disfigured by His enemies and not even look human - "Just as there were many who were appalled at Him--His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and His form marred beyond human likeness (so that He seemed to be "not a man")." Isaiah's description recalls the words of Stuart Townend's beautiful modern hymn "How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turned His face away. As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory (Heb 2:10)."

As mysterious as is the figure of the King of glory (Ps 24:7-10) condescending to become like a mere WORM, the picture is even more profound when we examine the original language. The Hebrew word for WORM is TOLA, which most scholars associate with a CRIMSON WORM (Coccus Ilicis) that in ancient times was crushed to procure its blood-red SCARLET dye (Hebrew for "scarlet" is same word TOLA), the SCARLET dye used to adorn the "ten curtains" of the Tabernacle (Ex 26:1), "the screen for the (one)

doorway of the" Tabernacle (Ex 26:36, cp "I am the door" Jn 10:9), the Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31, cp Jesus' cry with a loud voice, yielding up His Spirit and the Veil of the temple tearing from top to bottom, opening "a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His [torn] flesh" - Mt 27:50-51, Heb 10:19-20) and the beautiful garments of the high priest (Ex 28:5-6, Jesus became our "merciful and faithful high priest" Heb 2:17). Indeed, how deep is the mystery of these OT uses of TOLA which depict a WORM in Ps 22:6 and in 33 OT passages (most in Exodus) depict the blood-red SCARLET material which foreshadowed the Messiah, even His work of redemption on the Cross! Little did the Roman soldiers comprehend the deep significance of the SCARLET robe they placed on Christ, mocking Him with their cry "Hail, King of the Jews" (Mt 27:28-29)! And so we see the Holy One of Israel Who was "made for a little while lower than the angels" (Heb 2:9), then even lower than man, and yes finally made like a mere TOLA, a helpless "crimson worm," a WORM that was crushed beneath the load of our sin, "having become a curse for us." (Gal 3:13) "Well might the sun in darkness hide, And shut His glories in, When Christ, the mighty Maker died, For man the creature's sin." (I. Watts)

And so it should not surprise us to see the Spirit use the Hebrew word TOLA to picture our SIN! In Isaiah 1:18 Jehovah gives the universal invitation "Come now, and let us reason together. Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow. Though they are red like CRIMSON (Hebrew = TOLA!), they will be like wool." In a display of God's amazing, mysterious grace, the Spirit chose the same Hebrew word (TOLA) to depict MESSIAH and SIN! Indeed Paul explains this deep mystery, writing that the Father "made Him Who knew no sin to be SIN on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Cor 5:21) When Christ was crushed by the weight of our sins, like a crushed crimson worm (TOLA), He shed His blood, that our sins might be covered by His crimson flow and we might be forever clothed in Christ's "garments of salvation, wrapped with His robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10). These deep truths recall the original words of Isaac Watts' hymn "Alas! and did my Savior bleed, And did my Sovereign die! Would He devote that sacred head, For such a WORM as I?" And the answer is a resounding "Yes!" His crimson blood for our crimson sin, that we might be washed whiter than snow! "Hallelujah What a Savior! Thank You God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen"

[Play this wonderful modern hymn...](#)

[How Deep the Father's Love for Us](#)

by Stuart Townend

How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His Only Son, to make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turned His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One, bring many sons to glory

Behold the Man upon a cross, my sin upon His shoulders  
Ashamed, I hear my mocking voice call out among the scoffers  
It was my sin that held Him there until it was accomplished  
His dying breath has brought me life; I know that ["It is Finished!"](#)

I will not boast in anything: no gifts, no power, no wisdom  
But I will boast in Jesus Christ; His death and resurrection  
Why should I gain from His reward? I cannot give an answer  
But this I know with all my heart: His wounds have paid my ransom

**Worm** (scarlet, crimson) (08438)(**tola** - tôlê'âh, tôla'ath, tôla'ath) means **worm** in some contexts but most OT uses refer to a color, either **scarlet** or **crimson**. The first use in Ex 16:20 refers to "worms" that would breed when the manna was kept until the next day (in disobedience to God's instructions in Ex 16:20 - it is not a far stretch to see how our sin "breeds worms" and is a foul smell to God!) In Isa 1:18 **tola** is translated crimson and is used a figurative description of our sin. In Ps 22:6 David writes "I am **aworm** and not a man," which most scholars feel is ultimately fulfilled in the Messiah's crucifixion, which is an incredible description given that tola also describes sin. So in two verses (Isa 1:18 and Ps 22:6), **tola** describes our sin and the Sin Bearer, Christ Jesus (see 1Pe 2:24, 2Cor 5:21). In Leviticus 14 tola describes the **scarlet** (tola) string which was used in the purification ceremony for leprosy. In Numbers 19:6 **tola** is used in the red heifer purification ceremony (to purify one who had contact with a dead body). Most of the uses of tola are in Exodus where scarlet was one of the three dyes (blue, purple and scarlet) used to adorn the "ten curtains" of the Tabernacle (Ex 26:1), "the screen for the (one) doorway of the" Tabernacle (Ex 26:36, cp Jesus' fulfillment of this shadow when He declared "I am the door" Jn 10:9), the Veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31, cp Jesus' cry with a loud voice, yielding up His Spirit and the Veil of the temple tearing from top to bottom, opening "a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His [torn] flesh" - Mt 27:50-51, Heb 10:19-20) and the beautiful garments of the high priest (Ex 28:5-6, Jesus became our "merciful and faithful high priest" Heb 2:17). Indeed, how deep is the mystery of these OT uses of **tola** which depict Messiah as a **worm** in Ps 22:6 and in 33 OT passages depict the blood-red **scarlet** material which

foreshadowed the Messiah, even His work of redemption on the Cross! Note is that most of the uses of **tola** translated **scarlet** in Exodus are found in combination with shaniy (see discussion below) which is also translated scarlet. It is also notable that for reasons unclear to me the New American Standard concordance only has 3 uses of tola (Ex 16:20, Isa 1:18, Lam 4:5), and does not list the uses of **tola** when it is combined with shaniy (which are most of the uses in Exodus, all uses in Leviticus and 2 uses in Numbers). In addition to Ps 22:6 discussed above, **tola** is used to describe the low estate of a person, referring to them figuratively as a worm (Job 25:6; Isa. 41:14). In Jonah 4:7 **tola** describes the worm God appointed to destroy the prophet's shade.

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition of tola** (tôle'âh, tôla'ath, tôla'ath) - (1) worm, scarlet stuff, crimson = (a) worm - the female 'coccus ilicis' (b) scarlet stuff, crimson, scarlet, the dye made from the dried body of the female of the worm "coccus ilicis" (2) worm, maggot - (a) worm, grub (b) the worm "coccus ilicis" (Henry Morris) When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted. What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding His precious blood that He might "bring many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:9) (from page 73, "Biblical Basis for Modern Science", 1985, Baker Book House, by Henry Morris) (Ed note: Some Christian writers have stated that the after 3 days the crimson worm turns white and falls off, as if to symbolize a "resurrection." I have been unable to substantiate this information. While it certainly makes a good story, as believers we need to be careful to make sure that what we write is true and factual, lest we lose credibility with an already skeptical public. If you ever run across a legitimate scientific entomological description that validates this claim, please forward the information and I will post it.)

It is also notable that tola is figuratively used as symbol of one who is insignificant in Isaiah 41:14 and Job 25:6. How much more incredible that Jesus refers to Himself as a "tola!"

**TWOT** - (tôlā), tôle ā, tôla'at. Worm, scarlet, crimson. All three forms of this word mean "worm, maggot, larva"; two of them tôlā and tôla'at) also mean "scarlet, crimson." The worms referred to are probably the larvae of certain kinds of insects, primarily flies, moths, and beetles. In the OT they often symbolize the weakness and insignificance of man (Job 25:6; Ps 22:6; Isa 41:14); they are of a type that devour decaying matter (Ex 16:20), including corpses (Isa 14:11; 66:24). They also are of a kind that feed on various plants (Dt 28:39; Jon 4:7), a fact that helps us to understand the relationship between "worm" and "scarlet." In ancient times a brilliant scarlet or crimson dye was obtained from the female bodies of the kermes (Arabic qirmiz, whence our word "crimson") insect, Coccus ilicis, which lives on the kermes oak, Quercus coccifera, native to the Middle East (see J. Lauder milk in Natural History 58:116f.; R.J. Forbes, Studies in Ancient Technology, IV, pp. 102-6). The dye was highly prized (Lam 4:5) and as such was employed to color cloth used in the tabernacle and by those who worshiped there; tôla'at is attested twenty-six times in Exodus with the meaning "scarlet (stuff)," the permanent quality and deep red color of the dye made it suitable for use in the striking figure in Isa 1:18, where a forgiving God says to his wayward people: "Though your sins ... be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

**Swanson** - I. טֹלָא (tô-lā): n. masculine 1. deep red material, purple material, i.e., cloth or yarn, with a special focus on the color which ranges in terms like "scarlet/purple, violet/crimson" (Isa 1:18; La 4:5), note: the color can reference blood-guiltiness or royalty depending on context; 2. maggot, i.e., insects (such as flies) in the larva stage (Ex 16:20),

**Tola** - 43 uses (KJV) - Ex 16:20; 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5-6, 8, 15, 33; 35:6, 23, 25, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1-3, 5, 8, 24, 29; Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51-52; Nu 4:8; 19:6; Dt 28:39; Job 25:6; Ps 22:6; Isa 1:18; 14:11; 41:14; 66:24; Lam 4:5; Jonah 4:7

When **tola** is combined with **saniy/shaniy**, it is translated in the Lxx with the adjective **kokkinos**.

In Ps 22:6 the Lxx translates **tola** with the noun **skolex**.

**Related Resources:** See resources listed below for saniy/shaniy

**Scarlet** (08144)(**saniy/shaniy**) is a masculine noun always used for the color scarlet. In Isa 1:18 God says Israel's "sins are as **scarlet**" but promised that "They will be as white as snow." (the implication being that they would be forgiven if they repented and believed in the Messiah). See discussion of Tola above where we note these two Hebrew words occur juxtaposed in many of the passages in Exodus that describe the scarlet decorations of the Tabernacle.

**Saniy/shaniy** describes the **scarlet** thread on the twin Zerah, who was listed with his twin Perez in the line of Messiah, these twins being born to Tamar after Judah had illicit relations with her, thinking she was a harlot (Mt 1:3). In Josh 2:18 we see another harlot Rahab, where **saniy/shaniy** described the scarlet thread she was to show from her window so that she would be spared ("redeemed" so to speak) by the Israelites when they sacked the rest of Jericho. So in both of these uses we see the **scarlet** is part of the so-called "**scarlet thread of redemption**" which many writers see beginning in Genesis 3:15 (although there is no specific mention of a scarlet color, there is an implication that blood was spilled to prepare animal skin coverings for Adam and Eve). The uses of **saniy/shaniy** in Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are essentially identical to the uses described in more detailed under the

word study of **tola**. In Isaiah 1:18 Jehovah refers to Israel's "sins are as **scarlet** (saniy/shaniy)."

**Scarlet** is translated in the Lxx with the adjective **kokkinos**.

**Webster** says **scarlet** is "A beautiful bright red color, brighter than crimson (A deep red color)."

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition** - scarlet, crimson. Properly, the insect 'coccus ilicis' (see **tola** above), the dried body of the female yielding coloring matter from which is made the dye used for cloth to color it scarlet or crimson.

**Saniy/shaniy** - 42v - Ge 38:28, 30; Ex 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5f, 8, 15, 33; 35:6, 23, 25, 35; 36:8, 35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1-3, 5, 8, 24, 29; Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51-52; Nu 4:8; 19:6; Josh 2:18, 21; 2Sa 1:24; Pr 31:21; Song 4:3; Isa 1:18; Jer 4:30

The harlot **Rahab** was saved by a scarlet (saniy) thread and was later mentioned in the line of Messiah (Mt 1:5)

Josh 2:18 unless, when we come into the land, you tie this cord of **scarlet thread** in the window through which you let us down, and gather to yourself into the house your father and your mother and your brothers and all your father's household.

Josh 2:21 And she said, "According to your words, so be it." So she sent them away, and they departed; and she tied the **scarlet cord** in the window.

See **W A Criswell's** classic [The Scarlet Thread Through the Bible](#)

**Scarlet** (2847) (**kokkinos** from **kokkos** = kernel, grain, seed) (Latin = coccineus) means scarlet, crimson, red. In the neuter **kokkinos** is a substantive ("to kokkinon") referring to the scarlet cloth, dyed with kokkos, a scarlet "berry," which is actually the female of a scale insect that clings to oak leaves, dried and crushed to prepare a red dye (cp coccus [kermes] ilicis). **Kokkinos** is the Greek word used to translate the Hebrew word for CRIMSON (tola) in Isa 1:18 and in that passage is a figurative description of our sins (they are "red like crimson [Hebrew = tola; Lxx = kokkinos]").

**Thayer** - a kernel, the grain or berry of the ilex coccifera; these berries are the clusters of eggs of a female insect, the kermes (cf. English carmine, crimson), and when collected and pulverized produce a red which was used in dyeing, Pliny, h. n. 9, 41, 65; 16, 8, 12; 24, 4), crimson, scarlet-colored: Plutarch, Fab. 15 = phorein kokkina = scarlet robes.

**BDAG** - Philo; Jos., Ant. 8, 72 v.l.; Just., D. 46, 5) red, scarlet chlamus kokkinos = a red cloak of the 'sagum purpureum (paludamentum)' of Roman soldiers, a cheaply dyed garment in contrast to the expensive 'purple' garments whose hues were derived from shellfish and worn in the upper classes

**TDNT** on **kokkinos** - This word means "scarlet" (cf. the furnishings of the sanctuary in Ex. 26:1 etc., the scarlet stuff in Lev. 14:4, and the scarlet clothing of 2 Sam. 1:24). In the prophets scarlet is linked with sin, either as the opposite of white (Is. 1:18) or as a sign of luxury (Is. 3:23; Jer. 4:30). In the NT 1. Jesus is clothed in a scarlet robe in Mt. 27:28. This was probably a soldier's cloak; the king of peace, in a mocking misrepresentation, is thus clothed in warlike garb. 2. In Heb. 9:19 scarlet wool is mentioned in connection with atonement under the law (cf. Lev. 14:4, 6). 3. Scarlet and purple denote the pomp of Babylon's demonic power in Revelation. Arrayed in purple and scarlet, the woman sits on a scarlet beast (17:3-4). The fiery red of 6:4; 12:3 differs from the scarlet here, which epitomizes demonic abomination, lasciviousness, and ungodly power. The Messiah's army is clothed in white linen and rides on white horses (19:11ff.); the robes are made white in the atoning blood of the Lamb (7:14). We thus have a striking contrast to the woman who is clothed in scarlet and rides on a scarlet beast. [O. MICHEL, III, 810-14]

**Kokkinos** 6x the NT -

Matt 27:28 "And they (Roman Soldiers Mt 27:27) stripped Him, and put a **scarlet** robe on Him (and mocked Him Mt 27:29)."

Hebrews 9:19-note For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and **scarlet** wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people,

Revelation 17:3-note And he carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness; and I saw a woman sitting on a **scarlet** beast, full of blasphemous names, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was clothed in purple and **scarlet**, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, having in her hand a gold cup full of abominations and of the unclean things of her immorality

**Garland** ([A Testimony of Jesus Christ](#)) comments on the Scarlet Beast - Scarlet is kokkinos: "Scarlet cloth, dyed with kokkos, a scarlet 'berry,' actually the female of a scale insect that clings to oak leaves, dried and crushed to prepare a red dye." The beast is scarlet, because it is closely related to the fiery red dragon which empowers it (Rev. 12:3-note cf. Rev. 13:2-note). Her sitting on the beast may speak less of influence and more

of support. "The Woman seated on the Beast does not signify that she will rule over him, but intimates that he will support her." ([The Antichrist - By A. W. Pink](#))

Because the Beast represents a series of kings and kingdoms stretching through history, there is a tendency among many expositors to take the Harlot as an exclusively religious figure. The fact that she is seen riding upon the Beast is thought to necessitate her identification as exclusively religious, but not political:

The fact that the woman is riding the beast and is not the beast itself signifies that she represents ecclesiastical power as distinct from the beast which is political power. Her position, that of riding the beast, indicates on the one hand that she is supported by the political power of the beast, and on the other that she is in a dominant role and at least outwardly controls and directs the beast. ([Revelation 17: The Destruction Of Ecclesiastical Babylon - John F. Walvoord, The Revelation of Jesus Christ](#))

While we do not deny the significant religious role assigned to the Harlot, taking her to be an ecclesiastical system contradicts what Scripture records—that she is a city (Rev. 17:18-[note](#); Rev 18:21-[note](#)-Rev 19:2-[note](#)). There is no reason why she must be an ecclesiastical system when Scripture says she is a city. Moreover, she is also associated with wealth and excess (Rev. 17:4-[note](#))—these may speak equally of both politics and religion.

The Beast represents the historic development of kingdoms empowered by the dragon (Rev. 12:3-[note](#); Rev 13:1-[note](#)) and its ultimate manifestation at the time of the end. The Harlot is the city Babylon in all its aspects—combining commercial, political, and religious influence. She has ridden the beast throughout history.

Revelation 18:12-note cargoes of gold and silver and precious stones and pearls and fine linen and purple and silk and **scarlet**, and every kind of citron wood and every article of ivory and every article made from very costly wood and bronze and iron and marble,

Revelation 18:16-note saying, 'Woe, woe, the great city, she who was clothed in fine linen and purple and **scarlet**, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls;

**Kokkinos** - 43v in the Septuagint - Ge 38:28, 30; Ex 25:4; 26:1, 31, 36; 27:16; 28:5, 8, 15, 33; 31:4; 35:6, 25, 35; 36:35, 37; 38:18, 23; 39:1-3, 5, 8, 24, 29; Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51-2; Nu 4:8; 19:6; Josh 2:18; 2Sa 1:24; 2Chr 2:7, 14; 3:14; Song 4:3; 6:7; Isa 1:18; 3:23; Jer 4:30

**Seed** (grain) ([2848](#))(**kokkus**) is a noun which describes a grain (seed, kernel) or a scarlet "berry". Jesus used kokkus figuratively to speak of the Kingdom of heaven (begins small, grows big), of faith (small but real faith is still able to "move mountains" metaphorically speaking), and as an allusion to His death, burial (grain) and resurrection (it bears much fruit - Jn 12:24). Paul compares the "sowing" of the mortal body (i.e., when it dies - 1Cor 15:36) to sowing a bare grain, emphasizing that the "fruit" of that body (the resurrected body) is distinct and much better (1Cor 15:37, see 1Cor 15:42-44)

**BDAG** - 1. the kernel of various plants, seed, grain: mustard Mt 13:31; 17:20; Mk 4:31; Lk 13:19; 17:6; of wheat, etc2. **Formerly thought to be a berry, the kermes**, a female scale insect (similar to the cochineal), clings to the leaves of an oak tree. The dried bodies of these insects were used by the ancients to prepare a purplish-red dye. By metonymy **kokkus** was applied to the color ('scarlet') as well as to fabric treated with the dye.

**Kokkus** - 7x in 7v - grain (2), seed (5)

Matthew 13:31 He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard**seed**, which a man took and sowed in his field;

Matthew 17:20 And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard **seed**, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.

Mark 4:31 "It is like a mustard **seed**, which, when sown upon the soil, though it is smaller than all the seeds that are upon the soil,

Luke 13:19 "It is like a mustard **seed**, which a man took and threw into his own garden; and it grew and became a tree, and THE BIRDS OF THE AIR NESTED IN ITS BRANCHES."

Luke 17:6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a mustard**seed**, you would say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and be planted in the sea'; and it would obey you.

John 12:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless **again** of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.



1 Corinthians 15:37 and that which you sow, you do not sow the body which is to be, but a bare **grain**, perhaps of wheat or of something else.

Used only in the **apocrypha** - Sirach 45:10 and a sacred vestment of gold and aquamarine and scarlet, the work of an embroiderer; the pectoral of judgement, the urim and thummim, of plaited **crimson** (kokkus), the work of a craftsman;

**TDNT** on **Kokkus** - 1. This word, meaning "seed," occurs in the NT in the parables of Jesus. The mustard seed that grows into a great shrub (Mt 13:31-32 and par.) stands for the unassuming preaching of Jesus which as the divine action has all-embracing significance. The tree in whose branches birds nest (cf. Ezek. 17:22-23) symbolizes a rule that will extend to all peoples. In Lk. 17:6 the mustard seed is small compared to the solid sycamine tree, but it can uproot and remove it (cf. Mt. 17:20). The point here is not so much the power of even a tiny faith, but the fact that God's power is not proportionate to human faith. Faith, then, should look away from itself, and then the impossible becomes possible. 2. Paul and John both find in the grain of wheat (1Cor 15:37; Jn. 12:24) a sign of divine action and creation. Paul perceives in the burying and coming to life of the seed a symbol of the continuity of the old corporeality and the new, while John finds in it a symbol of the necessity of Christ's death and resurrection and of the divine law that links Master and disciple. The eschatological picture takes on Christological urgency in John. 3. Outside the NT kokkos also denotes the scarlet berry and the color scarlet (cf. 1 Clem. 8.3).

#### Related Resources:

- [Scarlet - American Tract Society Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Scarlet - Easton's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Scarlet \(Worm\) - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Worm: Scarlet-Worm \(distinct from above entry\) - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Scarlet - Hastings' Dictionary of the New Testament](#)
- [Scarlet - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#)
- [Scarlet - Webster's Dictionary](#)
- [Scarlet - 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [Scarlet - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature](#)
- [Color; Colors - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Colors - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)

**Worm** (4663) (**skolex**) literally means worm which **Thayer** says "specifically, that kind which preys upon dead bodies." **BDAG** adds that skolex is a "Symbol of insignificance and wretchedness." **Liddell-Scott** adds that **skolex** also refers to "the grubs of insects."

The only NT use is by Mark 9:48 ("worm" is also found in other passages not accepted by everyone as inspired - Mk 9:44, 46) who describes the place of the dead (those who remain dead in their trespasses as taught in Eph 2:1 and sins having never believed in Christ as He Himself taught in Jn 8:24, 28 and thus they are confined to **Gehenna** [\[additional note\]](#) and are separated eternally from Jehovah's glorious presence - read 2Th 1:7-10) - "(Mark 9:48) where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.

**Alan Carr** comments on the nature of the worm in Mk 9:48 - "The Worm! Is it an actual creature that eternally seeks to consume an un-consumable body? Is it something within man like memory that gnaws at him throughout eternity? Whatever it is, every inhabitant of Hell has one and it never dies!" ([Mark 9:43-48 A Place No One Wants to Go](#)) ([See also "Warnings from the Master"](#))

- [Punishment, Everlasting - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

**TDNT** - In the Greek World **skolex** "means literally "worm," and is also used for the the larvae of insects. In a transferred sense it means "thread," "wave," a "cake" shaped like a worm, and a "heap" of threshed grain."

**Skolex** occurs in 13v in the non-apocryphal **Septuagint** - Ex 16:20, 24; Deut 28:39; Ps 21:7; Pr 12:4; 25:20; Job 2:9; 7:5; 25:6; ; Jonah 4:7; Isa 14:11; 66:24. In Apocrypha - Judith 16:17; 1Macc 2:62; 2Macc 9:9. Sir 7:17; 10:11; 19:3

Exodus 16:20, 24 But they did not listen to Moses (regarding the clear instructions on not storing the manna overnight!), and some left part of it until morning, and it bred **worms** (tola; skolex) and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. 24 So they put it aside until morning, as Moses had ordered, and it did not become foul nor was there any **worm** (Hebrew = rimmah; Lxx = skolex) in it.

Deuteronomy 28:39 "You shall plant and cultivate vineyards, but you will neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes, for the **worm** (tola; skolex) will devour them.

Job 7:5 "My flesh is clothed with **worms** (Hebrew = rimmah; Lxx = skolex) and a crust of dirt, My skin hardens and runs.

Job 25:6 How much less man, that maggot (Hebrew = rimmah; Lxx = sapria = rottenness, putridity, decayed matter), And the son of man, that **worm** (tola; skolex)!"

Psalms 22:6 But I am a **worm** (Hebrew = rimmah; Lxx = skolex) and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people.

Isa 14:11 'Your (most conservative scholars take this a section describing the fall of Lucifer from his position of chief angel before Jehovah) pomp and the music of your harps Have been brought down to Sheol; **Maggots** (Hebrew = rimmah; Lxx = skolex) are spread out as your bed beneath you, And worms are your covering.'

Isa 66:24 "Then they shall go forth and look On the corpses of the men Who have transgressed against Me. For their worm shall not die, And their fire shall not be quenched; And they shall be an abhorrence to all mankind."

Jonah 4:7 But God appointed a **worm** (tola; skolex) when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered.

## The notes below are in no particular order: They are notes from my research for this topic.

In order to produce the dye for these robes the lowly worm had to be crushed. Of course, after the crushing had taken place the worm was no longer recognizable as such. So it was with Christ on the Cross where He was crushed under the weight of our sin. It was there under the wrath of God that He shed His blood for the sins of mankind. It is that crimson flow that makes it possible for us to be clothed in kingly robes of righteousness.

**John Phillips** - On the cross the Lord Jesus died-was crushed-beneath the load of our sin and under the wrath and curse of God. That crimson death of His made possible our royal robes of state. But, at the moment, He was a worm and no man-think of it! The eternal Son of God, Creator of every star, a worm and no man! So then, the Lord Jesus was to be abandoned by God.

Isa 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like **crimson** (Hebrew - Tola - same word for "Worm" in Ps 22:6), They will be like wool (naturally white)."

In other words Jehovah describes SIN as "red like CRIMSON," where the Hebrew word for "crimson" is tola, the word Psalm 22:6 translates as "worm." The Father "made (Jesus) Who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2Cor 5:21) The color crimson is the color of human blood. When He died on the Cross His crimson blood covered the crimson of all who by grace through faith receive His gift of salvation and "have washed their robes and made them white in the **blood of the Lamb**."

But a worm offers 'no resistance, it allows you to do what you like with it, kick it or squash it under your heel - a picture of true brokenness. And Jesus was willing to become just that for us - a worm and no man.

**Jesus was crushed as a worm, the tola**, crushed for the sins of this world. His blood was shed for us that we might be clothed in the bright raiment of His righteousness. Jesus is reduced to a level with the worm—that we may be raised higher than the angels!

From the coccus ilicus the ancients procured a blood red crimson (or scarlet) dye.

**Adrian Rogers** - I am a worm. Who is a worm? Jesus.

A **worm** is scorned and despised.

The Hebrew word, tolaath, can be translated either of two ways: "scarlet" or "worm." Why? Because in Old Testament times when people wanted to dye something scarlet, they would dip the material in ground-up worms and the material would take on a scarlet color.

Paul writes "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped" (Php 2:5-6) Have you ever gotten that low? He who made everything (including the lowly worm) is referred to as a worm! Here is where some insight into the Hebrew gives us an incredible picture of Christ's substitutionary, atoning work on the Cross. The Hebrew word for "worm" is TOLA, which is also translated as scarlet or crimson. Scholars teach us that when the worm (coccus ilicus) was crushed, it yielded a brilliant scarlet or crimson dye. In fact this dye was used many times in the description of the Tabernacle (which many see as filled with shadows pointing to the Messiah) - the curtains

The same word (tola) for worm is used in Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson (Hebrew = TOLA, same word as "worm" in Ps 22:6), They will be like wool." Thank God that when our Redeemer was crushed like a worm, He shed crimson blood for our crimson sin, that we might be washed whiter than snow!

I am a worm. He suffered at the hands of men. They stepped on Him like He was a worm, like He was a worm. The very Son of God shed blood.

Now here's the Lord Jesus, the Lord of glory, and He is described as a worm. And the word for worm here is for the crimson crocus, a small worm that was crushed to give crimson dye. **His crimson blood for our crimson sin.** If you step on a serpent, a serpent will strike back, but you step on a worm, he doesn't strike back! When Jesus was reviled, He reviled not again. And Jesus, like a worm, is crushed

**Robert Neighbour** - The word "worm" is not used, as you commonly think of it. It is the crimson coccus from which the scarlet dye was obtained. Consider for a moment how Jesus Christ, Who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, humbled Himself and came down to lowest earth. Not only did He become a man, but a servant, obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. Therefore the Psalmist wrote: "I am a worm, and no man."

Wiersbe - Can you imagine the Lord Jesus, who said, "I am the Good Shepherd," saying, "I am a worm"? But He became a worm for us so that we might become the children of God.

Warren Wiersbe adds that Psalm 22:6 is a description that applies especially "to our Savior. **'I am a worm and not a man'**" (NASB) is a **forgotten "I AM" statement** that speaks of how little value the leaders of Israel and the Roman officials placed on Jesus of Nazareth. A worm is a creature of the ground, helpless, frail, and unwanted. Isaiah 52:14 predicted that Messiah would be terribly disfigured by His enemies and not even look human - "Just as many were astonished at you, My people, so His appearance was **marred more than any man** (so that He seemed to be "not a man"), And His form more than the sons of men." Isaiah's description recalls the words of a beautiful modern hymn "How great the pain of searing loss, the Father turned His face away. As wounds which mar the chosen one, bring many sons to glory."

The fascinating truth is that the word used for WORM is the Hebrew word TOLA WHICH means describes the coccus worm used by the Hebrews to produce the scarlet dye. all the curtains of the Tabernacle scarlet red. When He said, "I am a worm," He meant more than that He had reached the lowest level.

Glen Spencer -

**H A Ironside** comments that "the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am a worm; I am the tola," and He had to be crushed in death that you and I might be clothed in glory. The glorious garments of our salvation are the garments that have been procured as a result of His death and His suffering.

Jon Courson explains that **"The TOLA would reproduce by fastening itself to the limb of a tree, dying in the process of bearing its young. The young would then feed on the body of the worm, leaving a small scarlet spot on the limb of the tree."**

The Hebrew word for scarlet is tola, and this same word is used by Isaiah to symbolize sin - Isa 1:18.

**There is a Jewish proverb** - There is a Jewish proverb which calls for two cards to be read. The one reads, "I am a worm." The other reads, "For me the stars were made."

**Henry Morris** - In ancient Israel, as in the modern world, there were many types of worms, and several different kinds are mentioned in the Bible. But the worm referred to in Psalm 22:6 was a particular worm known as the "scarlet worm." It was from this worm that a valuable secretion was obtained with which to make scarlet dyes. The same word is sometimes translated as "scarlet" or "crimson" (Isa. 1:18).

(Heb 2:10) For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

How interesting that when they clothed Jesus with the scarlet robe...

**WORM** - This worm was crushed for the purpose making a scarlet red dye that was used for making royal robes. When it was crushed, it became unrecognizable. In the same manner, our Lord in a way was crushed at Calvary under the weight of the sin of the world. The crushing effects of mankind's sin led to His blood being shed for all of us. Because of His blood, we are adorned by the Lord in royal robes of His righteousness.



Isaac Watts - Alas! and did my Savior bleed

And did my Sovereign die?

Would He devote that sacred head

For sinners such as I?

[originally, *For such a worm as I?*]

Alas! and did my Savior bleed

And did my Sovereign die?

Would He devote that sacred head

For sinners such as I?

[originally, *For such a worm as I?*]

Refrain

At the cross, at the cross where I first saw the light,

And the burden of my heart rolled away,

It was there by faith I received my sight,

And now I am happy all the day!

Thy body slain, sweet Jesus, Thine—

And bathed in its own blood—

While the firm mark of wrath divine,

His Soul in anguish stood.

Was it for crimes that I had done

He groaned upon the tree?

Amazing pity! grace unknown!

And love beyond degree!

Well might the sun in darkness hide

And shut his glories in,

When Christ, the mighty Maker died,

For man the creature's sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face

While His dear cross appears,

Dissolve my heart in thankfulness,

And melt my eyes to tears.

But drops of grief can ne'er repay

The debt of love I owe:

Here, Lord, I give my self away

'Tis all that I can do.

So we see that in Psalm 22:6 the Hebrew word *tola* describes the SIN BEARER and in Isaiah 1:18 *tola* describes the SIN! How wonderful the Scripture interweaves these truths in the New Testament Paul writing that "He Who knew no sin (cf "a worm" Ps 22:6) became sin (cf "your sins... red like crimson.") that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

In Leviticus 14 *tola* repeatedly describes the scarlet string used in the purification from the stigma of leprosy, leprosy usually taken as a symbol of sin. (Lev 14:4, 6, 49, 51, 52) and in Lev 19 was used in the ritual of the red heifer to cleanse those who were defiled because of contact with a corpse. (Lev 19:6)

**Worm** - extreme degradation, helplessness, contempt. To refer to oneself as a **worm** speaks of one who is in a state of extreme helplessness, something to be trodden down, crushed, unnoticed, even despised. As Jamieson says "these words of deep abasement, which express not His real, but esteemed, value." To the creatures His hands had made Christ was seen as a lowly worm and not even a man! O, the fathomless depth of the amazing "grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor (cp like a worm to be crushed), that you through His poverty might become rich." "See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are." (1Jn 3:1) 4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus,

Paul writes "For while we were still helpless (like a worm), at the right time Christ died (He became like a worm) for the ungodly." (Ro 5:6)

When Christ became a worm and not a man "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the Cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1Peter 2:24)

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Isaac Watts wrote that amazing hymn, "At the Cross." The original has this line:

"should He devote His sacred head for such a worm as I?"

Worm is a strong word but that's exactly how David described himself in Psalm 22:6:

"But I am a worm and not a man..."

Some hymn editor changed this language because it seemed too strong. It was cleaned up a bit so it now says, "for sinners such as I." Did you know that some denominations have changed this even more so that it doesn't even use the word 'sinners?' Some newer hymnals now contain these words: "Should He devote His sacred head for such a person as I?"

Scarlet (*tola*) figured largely in the symbolisms of the Tabernacle furnishing, and priestly vestments and functions, As types and shadows of the atonement. Scarlet (*tola*) was used for the ten Tabernacle curtains (Ex 26:1), the veil separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31), the screen covering the one entry way into the Tabernacle (Ex 26:36 - Christ said "I am the door" Jn 10:9, cp Jn 14:6), the garments of the high priest and his ephod (Ex 28:5-6, 8), a breastpiece of judgment (covered with 12 stones symbolizing the 12 tribes, with a pouch for the Urim and Thummim, over Aaron's heart before the LORD continually - Ex 28:29), ,

Rev 7:14 - 14 And I said to him, "My lord, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the **blood of the Lamb**.

The crimson blood of the Lamb of God shed for us on Calvary is depicted by the

"Sins as scarlet" ( Isaiah 1:18 ), i.e., as scarlet robes "glaring and habitual." Scarlet and crimson were the firmest of dyes, and thus not easily washed out.

McGee - The interesting thing is that the word used here for worm means the coccus worm, which was used by the Hebrews in dyeing all the curtains of the tabernacle scarlet red. When He said, "I am a worm," He meant more than that He had reached the lowest level. It was He who had said, "... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ..." (Isa. 1:18). Only His blood, my friend, can rub out that dark, deep spot in your life. Lady Macbeth, sleepwalking that night, went up and down rubbing her hands, insane with the guilt of murder. She says, "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." And she was right; they could not. She seemed to be continually washing her hands as she rubbed them together, and she cried, "Out damned spot! out, I say!" (Macbeth, Act V, Scene 1). My friend, there is only one thing that will take the spot of sin out of your life, that is the blood of Christ. The blood of the Lord Jesus, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. Only His blood. "if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1Jn 1:7)

Jon Courson on I am a worm - The Hebrew word translated "worm" is *tolaith*. In Hebrew, *tolaith* is used for both "worm" and "scarlet" because the *tolaith* was the worm from which red dye was extracted. The *tola* would reproduce by fastening itself to the limb of a tree, dying in the process of bearing its young. The young would then eat the body of the worm, leaving a small scarlet spot on the limb of the tree. After approximately three days, the crimson spot would dry, turn white, and flake off like snow. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow," Isaiah declared ("Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool." Isa 1:18), and the word he used was *tolaith*. Great is the mystery that God became a man (1 Timothy 3:16). But greater still is the mystery that the Man became a Lamb and the Lamb became a worm to save you and me.

Now the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am a worm; I am the *tola*," and He had to be crushed in death that you and I might be clothed in glory. The glorious garments of our salvation are the garments that have been procured as a result of His death and His suffering. (Isa 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness,

Psalms 22 tells of a crimson/scarlet worm. Crimson, the color of blood, as the blood of Jesus, shed of us, on a piece of wood, so that we might live. Crimson symbolic also of sin as in Isa 1:18. Indeed He Who knew no sin (no crimson) became sin (crimson) for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. O glory, hallelujah, what a Savior! We are overwhelmed by Your willingness to become a worm and not a man, that we might become Your sons and daughters forever in Christ. Amen

**Scarlet** is translated variously but one translation (*shaniy tola'* found 33x in the OT) describes "fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet" tent curtains which enclosed the Tabernacle of God (Ex 26:2), and remind us of Jesus' words "Destroy this Temple (the parallel of the Tabernacle) and in three days I will raise it up" (Jn 2:19) and how His executioners "stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him" (Mt 27:28). Scarlet was woven into the fine linen of the screen for the doorway (Ex 26:36), the one way into the Tabernacle, reminding us of Jesus' words "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and no one comes (cp enters into the Tabernacle) to the Father but through Me." (Jn 14:6) Scarlet was used in the veil when separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31) and when our Lord was crucified (His flesh rent), the veil was torn in two from top to bottom.

Luke 23:44 And it was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, 45 the sun being obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. 46 And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, "Father, INTO THY HANDS I COMMIT MY SPIRIT." And having said this, He breathed His last.

Mt 27:50 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. 51 And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook; and the rocks were split,

**Hastings Bible Dictionary** - Crimson and scarlet are shades of the same colour, and were both derived from the same insect, **the coccus ilicis or cochineal, which 'attaches itself to the leaves and twigs of the quercus coccifera' (Post), and is termed in Hebrew 'the scarlet worm.'** Scarlet-coloured garments were regarded as a mark of distinction and prosperity ( 2 Samuel 1:24 , Proverbs 31:21 ), but in OT scarlet is most frequently mentioned as one of the four liturgical, or, as we should say, ecclesiastical colours (see below).

[\*\*Kermes - Kermes ilicis \(=Coccus ilicis, Lat. = C. vermilio, G. Planchon\) 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica\*\*](#)

[\*\*Scarlet - Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature\*\*](#)

YIELDED UP HIS SPIRIT: *apheken* (3SAI: Jesus "sent away") to *pneuma*: *APHIEMI* = sent forth, laid aside, sent away, remit =

He was in control of His destiny unto the end. He loved us unto death. Hallelujah what a Savior! "He gave up his life because he willed it, when he willed it, and as he willed it" (Augustine).

The cry referred to by Matthew was "It is finished" (see Jn19:30 where He "delivered over" the spirit) This was not a cry of exhaustion, but a cry of victory. The purpose for which Jesus came was fulfilled. Redemption for the sins of the world had been accomplished. Satan's judgment was a fact. The verb translated yielded means "dismissed." Even in dying the Lord demonstrated His royal authority.

The Greek phrases used here and in Jn19:30 are unique in the N.T. In fifteen other Bible verses, "gave up the spirit," or "yielded up the spirit," is used to translate a single Hebrew or Greek word meaning <breathe out> or <expire.> This is true of the description of the death of Jesus in Mk15:37,39 and Lu23:46. But in Mt27:50 and Jn19:30 alone these expressions translate Greek phrases of three words, meaning <send away the spirit> or <deliver over the spirit.> The death of Jesus was different from that of any other man. No one could take His life from Him except as He was willing to permit it (Jn10:18). Christ chose to die so that we might live.

These colors figured largely in the symbolisms of the Tabernacle furnishing, and priestly vestments and functions, As types and shadows of the atonement. Scarlet (*tola*) was used for the ten Tabernacle curtains (Ex 26:1), the veil separating the Holy Place from

the Holy of Holies (Ex 26:31), the screen covering the one entry way into the Tabernacle (Ex 26:36 - Christ said "I am the door" Jn 10:9, cp Jn 14:6), the garments of the high priest and his ephod (Ex 28:5-6, 8), a breastpiece of judgment (covered with 12 stones symbolizing the 12 tribes, with a pouch for the Urim and Thummim, over Aaron's heart before the LORD continually - Ex 28:29), ,

This color scarlet was early known (Genesis 38:28). It was one of the colors of the ephod (Exodus 28:6), the girdle (8), and the breastplate (15) of the high priest. It is also mentioned in various other connections (Joshua 2:18 ; 2Sa 1:24 ; Lam 4:5 ; Nahum 2:3 ). **A scarlet robe was in mockery placed on our Lord (Matthew 27:28 ; Luke 23:11). "Sins as scarlet" ( Isaiah 1:18 ), i.e., as scarlet robes "glaring and habitual." Scarlet and crimson were the firmest of dyes, and thus not easily washed out.**

**Note attached by an Editor to Gill's comments** - When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she would never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to enter their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted.F24 What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding his precious blood that he might "bring many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10)! He died for us, that we might live through him! Psalm 22:6 describes such a worm and gives us this picture of Christ. (cf. Isaiah 1:18)

**Spurgeon** introduces Psalm 22 - This is beyond all others THE PSALM OF THE CROSS. It may have been actually repeated word by word by our Lord when hanging on the tree; it would be too bold to say that it was so, but even a casual reader may see that it might have been. It begins with, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"... For plaintive expressions uprising from unutterable depths of woe we may say of this psalm, "there is none like it." It is the photograph of our Lord's saddest hours, the record of his dying words, the lachrymatory of his last tears, the memorial of his expiring joys. David and his afflictions may be here in a very modified sense, but, as the star is concealed by the light of the sun, he who sees Jesus will probably neither see nor care to see David. Before us we have a description both of the darkness and of the glory of the cross, the sufferings of Christ and the glory which shall follow. Oh for grace to draw near and see this great sight! We should read reverently, putting off our shoes from off our feet, as Moses did at the burning bush, for if there be holy ground anywhere in Scripture it is in this psalm.

**Spurgeon on Psalm 22:6** - This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between "I AM" and "I am a worm"! yet such a double nature was found in the person of our Lord Jesus when bleeding upon the tree. He felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. He selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of himself when his body and soul had become a mass of misery—the very essence of agony—in the dying pangs of crucifixion. Man by nature is but a worm; but our Lord puts himself even beneath man, on account of the scorn that was heaped upon him and the weakness which he felt, and therefore he adds, "and no man." The privileges and blessings which belonged to the fathers he could not obtain while deserted by God, and common acts of humanity were not allowed him, for he was rejected of men; he was outlawed from the society of earth, and shut out from the smile of heaven. How utterly did the Saviour empty himself of all glory, and become of no reputation for our sakes! "A reproach of men" —their common butt and jest; a byword and a proverb unto them: the sport of the rabble, and the scorn of the rulers. Oh the caustic power of reproach, to those who endure it with patience, yet smart under it most painfully! "And despised of the people." The vox populi was against him. The very people who would once have crowned him then contemned him, and they who were benefited by his cures sneered at him in his woes. Sin is worthy of all reproach and contempt, and for this reason Jesus, the Sinbearer, was given up to be thus unworthily and shamefully entreated.

**Spurgeon** - "This verse is a miracle in language. How could the Lord of glory be brought to such abasement as to be not only lower than the angels, but even lower than men. What a contrast between 'I am' and 'I am a worm'!" ... "He felt himself to be comparable to a helpless, powerless, down-trodden worm, passive while crushed, and unnoticed and despised by those who trod upon him. He selects the weakest of creatures, which is all flesh; and becomes, when trodden upon, writhing, quivering flesh, utterly devoid of any might except strength to suffer. This was a true likeness of himself when his body and soul had become a mass of misery—the very essence of agony—in the dying pangs of crucifixion."

The veil separating the holy place from the holy of holies was decorated in scarlet (Ex 26:31 "a veil of blue and purple andscarlet [shaniy 8144 and tola 8438] material and fine twisted linen" )

**Preacher's Homiletical** - The **worm** in the passage before us, as in Isa 41:13, serves to designate nothingness within nothingness.

**Pulpit Commentary** - The worm is a symbol of extreme weakness and helplessness—it is naturally despised, derided, trodden upon.

**H A Ironside** - Here He, the holy One, is in contrast to every good man in all past ages. It was never known that God forsook a

righteous man. There He is on that Cross, the absolutely righteous One, dying, forsaken of God. Oh, He says, I have gone down lower than any man ever went before, "I am a worm, and no man." The word He used for worm is the word "tola," and the tola of the orient is a little worm something like the cochineal of Mexico which feeds on a certain kind of cactus. The people beat these plants until the cochineal fall into a basin and then they crush those little insects and the blood is that brilliant crimson dye that makes those bright Mexican garments. In Palestine and Syria they use the tola in the same way and it makes the beautiful permanent scarlet dye of the orient. It was very expensive and was worn only by the great and the rich and the noble. It is referred to again and again in Scripture. Solomon is said to have clothed the maidens of Israel in scarlet. Daniel was to be clothed in scarlet by Belshazzar. And that word "scarlet" is literally "the splendor of a worm." "They shall be clothed in the splendor of a worm." **Now the Lord Jesus Christ says, "I am a worm; I am the tola," and He had to be crushed in death that you and I might be clothed in glory. The glorious garments of our salvation are the garments that have been procured as a result of His death and His suffering.** (Isa 61:10 I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For **He has clothed me with garments of salvation**, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Cp Rev 3:18) What a wicked thing to refuse the garment of salvation, to think of spurning it and turning away from it when Christ had to go through so much in order to prepare it for us... He took the lowest place, the place of a worm, and was crushed in death that you and I might be clothed with the beautiful garments of righteousness and glory

**A worm** - Neglected and despised, lowness, vileness, insignificance. He had taken the position of the lowest of the low. He had become a worm, not a man, helpless and there to be kicked, and trodden on, and crushed under the heel. Christ may be said to have been a worm, with respect to the mean and poor condition in which he lived; but especially to the kind of death which he suffered; for he was stripped of his clothes, and fixed upon the cross, naked as a worm of the earth:

**Trapp on I am a worm** - Our Lord Christ, of whom the greatest part of this psalm must be understood, emptied and humbled himself to the utmost, Philippians 2:7-8, that we might be exalted; this Sun of righteousness went ten degrees back in the dial of his Father, that he might come unto us with health in his wings, &c.

**Matthew Henry** - Christ is a **worm**, and no man. It was great condescension that he became man, a step downwards, which is, and will be, the wonder of angels yet, as if it were too much, too great, to be a man, he becomes a worm, and no man... The word signifies such a worm as was used in dyeing scarlet or purple, whence some make it an allusion to his bloody sufferings.

**John Gill** - The Jews esteemed Christ as a worm, and treated him as such; he was loathsome to them and hated by them; everyone trampled upon him and trod him under foot as men do worms; such a phrase is used of him in Hebrews 10:29; there is an agreement in some things between the worm and Christ in his state of humiliation; as in its uncomeliness and disagreeable appearance; so in Christ the Jews could discern no form nor comeliness wherefore he should be desired; and in its weakness, the worm being an impotent, unarmed, and defenceless creatures, hence the Chaldee paraphrase renders it here "a weak worm"; and though Christ is the mighty God, and is also the Son of Man whom God made strong for himself, yet mere was a weakness in his human nature and he was crucified through it, 2 Corinthians 13:4; and it has been observed by some, that the word תולעת here used signifies the scarlet worm, or the worm that is in the grain or berry with which scarlet is dyed; and like, is scarlet worm did our Lord look, when by way of mockery he was clothed with a scarlet robe; and especially when he appeared in his dyed garments, and was red in his apparel, as one that treadeth in the wine fat; when his body was covered with blood when he hung upon the cross, which was shed to make crimson and scarlet sins as white as wool.

[See Scarlet-Worm - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)

**Keil-Delitzsch** - **Worm** is more particularly the kermes, or cochineal (vermiculus, whence color vermiculi, vermeil, vermiglio); but the point of comparison in the present instance is not the blood-red appearance, but the suffering so utterly defenseless and even ignominious.

**Geneva Study Bible** - And seeming most miserable of all creatures, which referred to Christ, and in this appears the unspeakable love of God for man, that he would thus abase his son for our sakes.

Isa 52:14 Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men.

Even if our Lord did not utter the words of Ps 22:6, they are surely applicable to His state on the day of His crucifixion for like a worm "He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." (Isa 53:3)

And like the crimson worm who gave its life that the newly born might have life, our Lord Jesus "a worm and not a man" "gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." (Eph 5:2) "and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the (crimson) blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." (Col 1:20)



Eph 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace,

Phil 2:6-7 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Heb 9:14 how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1Pe 1:18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

Rev 1:5b To Him who loves us, and released us from our sins by His blood,

Rev 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

And as the crimson worm was crushed to yield the prized red dye, used to adorn the Tabernacle of God (it even a symbol of the Lord Jesus), Isaiah said "He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed" (Isa 53:4) for "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." (1Pe 2:24)

John Gill on Ps 22:6 - it has been observed by some, that the word (Heb.) there used signifies the scarlet worm, or the worm that is in the grain or berry with which scarlet is dyed: and like this scarlet worm did our Lord look, when by way of mockery he was clothed with a scarlet robe; and especially when he appeared in his dyed garments, and was red in his apparel, as one that treadeth in the wine fat; when his body was covered with blood when he hung upon the cross, which was shed to make crimson and scarlet sins as white as snow. John Gill.

KJV Commentary - The worm is a symbol of extreme weakness and helplessness, something to be trodden down, unnoticed, and despised.

Henry Morris - On the cross the Lord Jesus called himself a "scarlet worm." This same word refers to the worm from which the Israelites of that day obtained their red dyes and is usually translated "crimson" or "scarlet." The female worm of this species, when laying her eggs, affixes her body to a wood surface on which she will die after the young are born. The wood, her body, and the young are reddened with the death of the life-giving mother. In a similar image the Lord Jesus made "peace through the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20).

**Warren Wiersbe on I am a worm** - These words especially apply to our Savior. "I am a worm and not a man" (NASB) is a forgotten "I am" statement that speaks of how little value the leaders of Israel and the Roman officials placed on Jesus of Nazareth. A worm is a creature of the ground, helpless, frail, and unwanted. Isaiah 52:14 predicted that Messiah would be terribly disfigured by His enemies and not even look human.

**J Vernon McGee on I am a worm** - What does He mean when He says, "I am a worm"? He has roared like a lion; now He says, "I am a worm." It is because He has reached the very lowest place. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not" (Isa. 53:3). "I am a worm." **The interesting thing is that the word used here for worm means the coccus worm, which was used by the Hebrews in dyeing all the curtains of the tabernacle scarlet red. When He said, "I am a worm," He meant more than that He had reached the lowest level. It was He who had said, "... though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ..." (Isa. 1:18). Only His blood, my friend, can rub out that dark, deep spot in your life.** Lady Macbeth, sleepwalking that night, went up and down rubbing her hands, insane with the guilt of murder. She says, "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand." And she was right; they could not. She seemed to be continually washing her hands as she rubbed them together, and she cried, "Out damned spot! out, I say!" (Macbeth, Act V, Scene 1). **My friend, there is only one thing that will take the spot of sin out of your life, that is the blood of Christ. The blood of the Lord Jesus, God's Son, cleanses from all sin. Only His blood. "if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." (1Jn 1:7)**

**UBS Handbook** - The figurative language of verse 6a must be clear to the readers; the psalmist is not stating a fact when he says he is not a man but only a worm. The psalmist is giving the view of others concerning himself.

Psalm 22:6 But I am a worm, and not a man, A reproach of men, and despised by the people.

Paul said in one of his epistles that Christ **“made himself of no reputation”** (Philippians 2:7).

While we have no record that Jesus actually uttered the words of Psalm 22:6 on the Cross, it is surely not a coincidence that the worm used in the Psalm dramatically depicts the substitutionary, atoning blood sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Jesus calls Himself a "SCARLET WORM"... for me He died... deep, deep mystery of redemption. Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain, yea, even crushed like a helpless, defenseless worm.

The Tola climbs on a tree by itself, as if impelled by nature to fulfill its mission. In the same way Jesus declared "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." (Jn 10:17-18)

Heb 2:9 But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in **bringing many sons to glory**, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

The two word's are mostly interchangeable, and the context determines if we are talking about the color as an adjective, or the grub or dye from it, as a noun.

Scarlet (08144) (shani) is translated as scarlet in all 42 OT uses.

8144 - The first use is in Ge 38:28, 30 describing the scarlet thread tied on the hand of

Gen 38:27-30 And it came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. 28 Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, **one put out a hand**, and the midwife took and tied a **scarlet thread** on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. 30 And afterward his brother came out who had the **scarlet thread** on his hand; and he was named Zerah. Matthew records "and to Judah were born Perez and Zerah by Tamar" (Mt 1:3)

Exodus 36:35 - Moreover, he made the veil of blue and purple and **scarlet** material, and fine twisted linen; he made it with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman

Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson (Hebrew = tola; Lxx = kokkinos), They will be like wool.

Matthew 27:28 They stripped Him and put a **scarlet** (kokkinos) robe on Him.

**Brown-Driver-Briggs' Definition** - scarlet, crimson. Properly, the insect 'coccus ilicis', the dried body of the female yielding colouring matter from which is made the dye used for cloth to colour it scarlet or crimson.

Kermes is one of the oldest dyes known, being mentioned in the Bible book of Genesis (38:28) as scarlet or crimson. It is obtained from the bodies of an insect, Kermes ilices (formerly known as Coccus ilicis). It is chemically very similar to carmine and, as the older name indicates, the insects are related to those from which carmine is obtained. Although it forms bright crimson lakes, it is not used in histotechnology. ([Stainsfile - Kermes](#))

**Tola** is found in combination with **shaniy** (08144) 33 times = Exo 25:4 Exo 26:1 Exo 26:31 Exo 26:36 Exo 27:16 Exo 28:5 Exo 28:6 Exo 28:8 Exo 28:15 Exo 28:33 Exo 35:6 Exo 35:23 Exo 35:25 Exo 35:35 Exo 36:8 Exo 36:35 Exo 36:37 Exo 38:18 Exo 38:23 Exo 39:1 Exo 39:2 Exo 39:3 Exo 39:5 Exo 39:8 Exo 39:24 Exo 39:29 Lev 14:4 Lev 14:6 Lev 14:49 Lev 14:51 Lev 14:52 Num 4:8 Num 19:6

Tola (43v in KJV)

Worm (08438) (tola)

**Lanny and Marilyn Johnson** give us a wonderful background on the Worm of Psalm 22:6 - Psalm 22 (sometimes called the Psalm of the Cross) is a great chapter of the Bible that tells about the suffering and death of Christ 1,000 years before he actually gave his life upon the cross. Verse 1 says, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? ..." In the gospels of Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34, Jesus cried out the same words while hanging on the cross. In verse 6 of Psalm 22, Jesus says something odd: "But I am a worm, and no man." What did he mean by saying "I am a worm"?

Usually in the Bible, the Hebrew word for a worm is "rimmah", which means a maggot – but the Hebrew word Jesus used here for worm, is tôla'at, which means "**Crimson worm**" or "**Scarlet worm**". **Both scarlet and crimson are the colors of blood – deep red.**

The Crimson worm [coccus ilicis] is a very special worm that looks more like a grub than a worm. When it is time for the female or mother Crimson worm to have babies (which she does only one time in her life), she finds the trunk of a tree, a wooden fencepost or a stick. She then attaches her body to that wood and makes a hard crimson shell. She is so strongly and permanently stuck to the wood that the shell can never be removed without tearing her body completely apart and killing her.

The Crimson worm then lays her eggs under her body and the protective shell. When the baby worms (or larvae) hatch, they stay under the shell. Not only does the mother's body give protection for her babies, but it also provides them with food – the babies feed on the LIVING body of the mother!

After just a few days, when the young worms grow to the point that they are able to take care of themselves, the mother dies. **As the mother Crimson worm dies, she oozes a crimson or scarlet red dye which not only stains the wood she is attached to, but also her young children. They are colored scarlet red for the rest of their lives. After three days, the dead mother Crimson worm's body loses its crimson color and turns into a white wax which falls to the ground like snow.**

So what did Jesus mean by saying **"I am a worm"**? There are a lot of ideas what Jesus might have meant, but nobody really knows for sure. However, it is very interesting that, just like the Crimson worm, Jesus sacrificed or gave up his life on a tree so that His children might be washed with his crimson blood and their sins cleaned white as snow (Isa 1:18). He died for us, that we might live through Him (Col 3:4)!

**Henry Morris** - In ancient Israel, as in the modern world, there were many types of worms, and several different kinds are mentioned in the Bible. But the worm referred to in Psalm 22:6 was a particular worm known as the "scarlet worm." It was from this worm that a valuable secretion was obtained with which to make scarlet dyes. The same word is sometimes translated as "scarlet" or "crimson" (Isa. 1:18). When the female of the scarlet worm species was ready to give birth to her young, she would attach her body to the trunk of a tree, fixing herself so firmly and permanently that she could never leave again. The eggs deposited beneath her body were thus protected until the larvae were hatched and able to leave and enter their own life cycle. As the mother died, the crimson fluid stained her body and the surrounding wood. From the dead bodies of such female scarlet worms, the commercial scarlet dyes of antiquity were extracted. What a picture this gives of Christ, dying on the tree, shedding His precious blood that He might bring "many sons unto glory" (Heb. 2:10)! He died for us, that we might live through Him! (The Biblical Basis for Modern Science)

**Scarlet Worm** - Look at the 22nd Psalm. This is the great Psalm of the crucifixion of Christ written 1,000 years before it was fulfilled. It describes in great detail the sufferings of Christ on the cross. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" he cries out. Then down in verse 6... he says "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people." What did he mean by saying "I am a worm"?... This particular worm is different from other kinds of worms. There are different kinds of worms, different varieties, but this is a particular worm. It means more than just he is not a man. Isaiah 52 says, "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." He was literally made corruption personified; he didn't even look like a man there on the cross\*; it is talking about more than that here. He says "I am a worm and no man." **This is a scarlet worm and the reason it was called that was because it had the ability to secrete a scarlet fluid which was used in making the scarlet dye that they used in ancient days. As a matter of fact, when you find the word "scarlet" in the bible, it's the same word.** "Though your sins be as scarlet," it's the same word exactly. The worm was identified with the crimson color. The life cycle of that worm is something like this: when the mother worm was ready to give birth to the baby worms, she would find the trunk of a tree, a post or a stick somewhere and then she would plant her body in that wood and she would implant her body so firmly in it that she could never leave it again. And then the young would be brought forth and the mother's body would provide protection for the babies as long as they needed before they could get out and take care of themselves. Then the mother would die, and in the process, the scarlet fluid would stain her body and the body of the young and the tree and so on. The Lord Jesus said "I am like that scarlet worm." He's making peace through the blood of his cross; he's bringing many sons into glory through the suffering. And this is a graphic testimony of the fact that eternal life comes out of the suffering and death of the Son of God. ([Insects -- Incredible and Inspirational - from Bible & Science tape series](#))