



*Anglican Orthodox Church*



**THE CRIMSON WORM**

Psalm 22, a messianic psalm, begins with these woeful and wonderful words, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Of the seven words from the cross, these words are perhaps the most mysterious. And of these words, the central word is, 'WHY?' Why did the Creator of the world and the King of Glory condescend to be made lowly as man and to offer himself a sacrifice for the Redemption of men?

Lenten Season is past and Easter has been observed another year in our Church, but perhaps we should continue to observe the great promise and meaning of these holy days throughout the Church year.

WHY did Christ suffer and die for you and me? Because without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin(Heb 9:22), and that sacrifice must be one without blemish or guilt. Jesus Christ is the one and only substitute who could qualify to be the atoning Lamb whose blood could redeem us. The ONLY one in all of time and eternity. And He was willing to make the uttermost sacrifice for sinful man.

In verse 6 of this great Psalm describing the suffering of Christ on the cross, our Saviour makes a rather puzzling statement: "But I am a worm, and no man." As a child I used to ponder those words in disbelief. How could Jesus describe Himself so? A close study of the word 'worm' as used in this text will render a deeper appreciation for what our Saviour is relating. The Hebrew word for worm, used in this text, is TOLA'ATH. The precise meaning of this Hebrew word is 'crimson worm'. The Crimson worm is common to the region of old Israel and was used in the dyeing of garments to scarlet. The natural characteristics and life cycle of this worm are noteworthy.

When the Crimson worm is prepared to reproduce offspring (and she does so only once in her life) she rigidly attaches herself to a tree or a wooden fencepost in such a way that she can never be removed without tearing her body completely apart. And when her young ones arrive, they feed upon the LIVING body of the mother - a decidedly painful sacrifice. Then, when the young are able to survive apart from the mother, she dies. And as she dies, she exudes a scarlet dye which not only stains the tree, but her young ones as well. Thus they are colored by the mother's scarlet dye and remain so for the remainder of their lives. How like the blood of Jesus, forever shed as a covering for us!

The most important and critical question any of us can ask ourselves is, "Are we covered by the blood of Jesus? Are our doorposts and lintels stained with his redeeming blood(Exodus 12:22)? When others look upon us, do they see the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ?"

How about you, my friends? Are you covered by the Blood?

PRAISE THE NAME OF JESUS!

- by Jerry Ogles

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P. O. Box 128  
Statesville, N.C. 28687

Phone: 704-873-8365  
E-mail: [aocusa@unitedenergy.net](mailto:aocusa@unitedenergy.net)  
Church: [standrews@alaweb.com](mailto:standrews@alaweb.com)