

# Joseph Chambers

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## Tattoos & Body Mutilation

by Joseph Chambers

Tattooing, body marking, body piercing, and now body mutilation, where will it end? Just like any trend or downward spiral, it goes deeper and deeper, lower and lower. When any society or culture leaves the absolutes of Biblical truths, there is no bottom. The “body” is the Lord’s. The human life and body is a sacred trust. There are holy things in our world and no Christian culture can survive when we forget to hold those things in reverence.

There are three persons that bear record in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. There are three that bear witness in earth: the Holy Spirit, the Word, and the Blood. (I John 5:7-8) There are three sacred trusts we hold in reverence in our lives: the body, the Scripture, and the Lord’s Day. When you depart from any of these three basic sets of principles or truths, there is no more foundation on which to build. Follow any religious institution or movement that has left these three foundational truths and they have nothing to build on that holds them in balance. Remember, **“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”** (Psalm 11:3). Please notice that the “Word of God,” either in person or in revelation is at the center of all three basic principles of our spiritual world.

**Visiting The Subculture of Body Mutilation** – Let’s go on a visit to an acceptable and legitimate tattoo business in the average community of America. These businesses are often in small shopping malls, sometimes in a run down area of the city, but not always. The signs that I have viewed almost always use the idea of tattoos as the identification. As you enter the store, there will be multiple displays of designs that you may choose. The first thing you will notice is the oddity of these designs. They are normally not beautiful, peaceful, or natural looking.

In fact, the designs clearly come from a totally different cultural sense. If you have viewed publications with pictures from an eastern culture as Japan, China, or Arabia, you will immediately see the similarities. The eyes in either the person or the animal are foreboding and evil. The pictures will include Satan, witchcraft ideas, New Age, and strange angelic creatures. Many are clearly Hindu. Buddha is popular and beastly creatures are evident to a large degree. Snakes are very popular and are designed to wrap around the body, the arms, or legs. Celtic, Nords, and Druids have a strong presence, and even the designs depicting Jesus or some Bible idea are more Catholic and Eastern in appearance.

One picture of Jesus that I viewed is too vulgar to show you. It was an African Jesus nude from the waist up, but with His genitals protruding. Blasphemy is the only word fitting to describe it. Although, the owner had been doing tattoos for forty-one years, he declared that he had never noticed this picture on his wall. When I say that the tattoo culture is out of hell, that’s a mild

description. Yet, we have a multitude of modern religious souls that have chosen this lifestyle as acceptable.

One large, local church in our city has hired a minister for the “young adults” that is clearly a part of this culture. The Charlotte Observer quoted him saying, **“I want to reach the person in the tattoo parlor, who pierced my ears . . . That’s the kind of person I want to go after. I want to span the spectrum.”** The writer stated of this minister, **“And he pierced his second ear after coming to \_\_\_\_\_ to show that the church is open to all.”** (*The Charlotte Observer, Ken Garfield.*) I wonder if this minister has any understanding of what it means to be “born again” or remade into the image of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Roots of the Tattoo World** – When I do programs on our talk radio broadcast, my staff and I do ample research. We have 2 two-hour broadcasts on this subject available. We want to know the background and foundational idea behind every movement or cultural change affecting our world. America used to be a “culture of life,” a “culture of the beautiful,” but that is changing at a rapid rate. The Eastern cultures are quickly becoming deeply rooted in our world. We are moving quickly from Western and basic Christian thought to Eastern and the many heathen ways of thinking and living. The Eastern world had its origination out of Babylon, while the Western nations were born out of Jerusalem. By that statement I mean the spiritual evolution from those two world centers. This change from Western to Eastern had to happen to fulfill “End Time” prophecy. I believe Babylon will be the capitol of the seven-year Antichrist kingdom and her ideas must come to rule in that kingdom.

Hinduism is one of the strongest influences toward body mutilation of any description. A Hindu website made the following boast, **“While tattoos among sailors and motorcycle clubs might seem the most obvious to someone living in the West, many cultures, including that of the Hindus, have long regarded tattoos as essential aids in life and even as passports into the world beyond death. So why tattoos? What does a symbol embedded under the skin have to do with the spirit? In part, it is related to self-mortification, which has a long history in religion. Whether it’s a Buddhist lama drawing a blade across his tongue, a Lakota warrior hanging for hours by hooks puncturing his chest or a sadhu piercing his cheeks and tongues with small spears, nearly every culture has a sect that regards physical suffering, or an apparent indifference to it, as just another step in spiritual development. Tattoos are believed to have begun as cuts in the skin to form scars, a decidedly painful process. The color, from soot or plants, came later. Anthropologists believe tattoos are part of the evolution of a tradition that views the voluntary endurance of pain as a way to tap into a primal urge for meaning and belonging. And sacred symbols, from cave painting to mandalas, are as old as the struggle to understand our world.”** (*Hinduism Today, July/August, 2001.*)

This issue from the Hindu world provided us with a picture of three basic reasons that undergird the tattoo culture. It is clearly a spiritualistic movement that finds its entire history in the search for God outside the revelations of Biblical truth. The air is charged today with this search for self and meaning rooted outside the tried and true experience of the Blood of Jesus. What is most disturbing, as the minister in Charlotte stated, is the integrating of the sacred and the sacrilegious.

The Hindu website gave three significant aspects of the tattoo experiences. One is “Devotional,” the second is “Tattoos and the Afterlife,” and “Tattoos for Protection.” They stated the following about the first idea of tattoo’s “Devotional” aspect, **“Religious tattoos can be viewed with two levels of devotion: there’s the ordeal of receiving the tattoo, the tedious and painful process of injecting pigment into the flesh, and then there’s the symbolism and color of the design itself. Among the most devoutly tattooed groups anywhere is the community of Ramnaamis. Scattered across the Indian states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, this sect of untouchables found refuge from harm in their distinctive tattoos the name “Ram” repeated in Sanskrit on practically every inch of skin, even on the tongue and inside the lips. Ramnaamis began their extraordinary custom during the Hindu reformist movement of the 19th century when they angered the upper-caste brahmins by adopting brahminical customs. To protect themselves against the brahmins’ wrath, the Ramnaamis tattooed the name of Lord Ram on their bodies.”** (*Ibid.*)

Clearly, the name of their gods was a primary focus. Since their gods were unknowable and idol, they were forced to identify with them by strange mythical methods. Instead of God in their heart, the gods were painted in their flesh. The website continued by writing, **“With a rich tradition and thousands of Deities, Hinduism itself is today the source of countless tattoo designs. Tattoos depicting popular Gods such as Siva, Ganesha and Kali or sacred symbols like “Om” adorn the flesh of Hindus and non-Hindus alike. Some of the most elaborate tattoo patterns anywhere are on the women of the Ribari tribe of Kutch, the very region in Northwest India just devastated by an earthquake. It is one of the places to which the Pandavas were exiled during the *Mahabharata*. The members of the nomadic Ribari tribe live as their ancestors did; their tattoos being tangible symbols of the people’s strong spirit and concern with faith and survival.”** (*Ibid.*) What an empty search for God!

The aspect of “Tattoos & the Afterlife” shows the marked difference between faith in a resurrected Christ and the heathen ideas of our hope for the future. This fact helps us understand why Moses was given the clear direction against marking the flesh. God said, **“Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD.”** (Leviticus 19:28). Tattooing has always represented this heathen idea of the afterlife and the Holy Spirit warned the believer to stay clear of all such superstition.

Listen to what the writer in this Hindu article documented. **“The Maoris believed that a spirit would recognize their elaborate facial tattoos after their death and give them the vision to find their way to the next world. The Dayak tribes of Borneo thought their hand tattoos would illuminate the darkness of the afterlife as the soul searched for the River of the Dead. Maligang, the spirit guarding the river, would check for the tattoo, which earned the soul the right to cross the river. This is similar to the Lakota tradition, which teaches that the soul of the dead starts its journey to the other world on the starry spirit road (Milky Way). Along the path, it will pass Owl Woman, who inspects it for the tattoo. If she can’t find it, she prevents the soul’s passage. The Inuits of Alaska also tattooed themselves in preparation for death rituals. Small dots were applied to the pallbearer at various joints along the body to protect against evil spirits. Some believe that the soul resembles the body that houses it and retains this appearance even after death, including the person’s tattoos. In other cultures it is believed that death changes the person’s appearance so drastically**

**that your tattoos were the only form of identification that will be left to you. Without tattoos you are doomed to wander forever in the afterworld.”** (*Hinduism Today, July/August, 2001.*) Nothing is scarier in the world of idol worship than the constant search for passage into the afterlife. Death becomes the dark and hopeless adventure into the regions of demons and lurking spirits of destruction.

The last of the three basic aspects of the tattoo world is “Protection from Evil Spirits.” The gods of heathenism are a warring crowd of competing spirits. The idol worshippers were constantly caught up in these spirit wars and seeking some means of protection. This author describes the tattoos as amulets. **“Many cultures regard tattoos as protective amulets, and such magical applications are closely linked to religious beliefs. Ainu women in Japan, for instance, tattoo themselves with images of their Goddess, which is able to repel evil spirits and thus protect from disease. Iraqis commonly tattoo a dot at the end of a child’s nose to guard against illness. A tattoo of Hanuman is used to relieve pain among Hindus. Aborigines in Australia believe tattoos on their arms allow them to dodge boomerangs. Soldiers in Burma tattoo their thighs to be invulnerable in war, and Cambodian men cover themselves in tattoos to make themselves impervious to harm, even from bullets. The use of tattoos in Cambodia may have come centuries ago from Indian settlers who practiced Vedic rituals. Sacred Buddhist texts are a favorite tattoo in Thailand, where they are believed to have magical power. In an initiation rite known as the “Krob Kru,” the devotee lights incense and prays in preparation. The tattoo artist uses a special rod to inscribe the sacred text on the chest, back or arms. A shaman then tests the tattoo’s potency by giving each tattoo three or four strong swipes of a sword. Tattoo recipients often enter a state of ecstasy or bust into violent trances.”** (*Ibid.*)

This author tells about the Hawaiians, who have specific tattoo gods. They are called *Aumakua* and either protect or destroy, depending on the attention given to the god. One of the heartbreaking truths about heathenism is the unholy bondage the shaman priest holds over the people. They are forced to serve these false gods by threats and spells. It’s important to understand that you cannot disconnect the tattoo of a particular idol god and the demon spirit behind that idol. When you play their game, you reap their bondage.

**Evolution & Darwinism** – We cannot escape the effect that evolution has had on our present generation of young people. Man was created by the supernatural action of Jehovah God. We are in His likeness and image, and our temple or body is His dwelling place. Our body cannot be a vacuum but for a short period of time. If God does not guard the gate, then a different spirit will seek control. Demon control is not the same as demon possession. While there is certainly a tremendous amount of possession, much of our world is under Lucifer’s control.

Any kind of body piercing, marking, or tattooing is connected to spirit control. The evil spirit may not control the life at the beginning of the involvement with this world, but will certainly seek to do so eventually. Visit a few tattoo shops and witness about the Lord Jesus. You will quickly find that a large number of them are into heathen religions of Native Indians, Hindus, etc. You absolutely cannot separate this sub-culture from evil spirits and heathen religions. When you adopt their culture, you accept the spirit that birthed that culture.

## **Conclusion**

God created man in His own image and forbids any believer to mark, mutilate, or pierce their body. Satan hates the human body because of its likeness to the Creator. The body is sacred and to treat it like an idol god would suggest starting a process of descent into the vulgar and absurd. It does not matter at all to Satan how he brings you under bondage to his destructive powers. His goal is to make you a wreck and to bring you to the place that there is no way out. Already a great portion of this generation is hopelessly locked into a subculture of darkness and emotional insanity.