



August 16, 2024

What's the Big Deal with "Inking"?

Warm hellos once again friends, brethren, fellow laborers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from back here in Spanish Fort, AL. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

We've returned from our visit to South Dakota and Nebraska and are now playing catch up with details here that accumulated in our absence.

So much is going on right now in the world and this nation that it's hard to single out any one specific topic to talk about.

During this trip I spent more time out in public than normal, and the change of the culture in our country alone is quite noticeable!

I recall a trip my wife and I took to Australia in February of 2014. In the couple of weeks we were there something jumped out at us that like recently on this trip similarly did so. We noticed how many women had not only tattoos more than normal, but many were covered on one half side of their bodies! One could not help but notice. I'm not singling out women, as many men were the same.

Now, fast forward 10 years and well, it is easier to spot those in public who are not "inked".

Okay, you might ask, what's the big deal, our bodies our choice right?

As our world drifts further and further from a relationship with our Father in heaven and His Son, and His Word the Bible, referring to it as any kind of "authority" is not often appreciated. That being said, it does not negate your and

my responsibility to recognize it as such, and then do what it has recorded within its pages.

You see, (and you might be surprised) tattooing is directly mentioned in the Bible. *“You shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I am the Lord”* (Leviticus 19:28).

The original Hebrew words are “Nathan qajaq” which as per the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia refer to “the procedure of making a mark or pattern on the skin by pricking it with a needle coated with pigment” (1988, Vol. 4, p. 739).

Many still believe that this prohibition against tattoos in Leviticus 19:28 applies only in the specific context of particular pagan practices—that the tattoos referred to are those that, like the cuttings, are for the dead (that is, as part of idolatrous mourning customs and attempts to induce the gods to help the dead in the afterlife).

However the prohibition against tattooing in Leviticus 19:28 stands independently from “cuttings of the flesh for the dead” by the mere specific wording of the verse.

The Unger’s Bible Dictionary supports the above by stating: “In Leviticus 19:28 we find two prohibitions of an unnatural disfigurement of the body: *‘You shall not make any cutting in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you.’* The latter (Heb. qajaq, ‘incision’) refers to tattooing, and has no reference to idolatrous usages, but was intended to inculcate upon the Israelites a proper reverence for God’s creation” (1974, p. 696, emphasis ours).

Now I’m assuming most reading my letter desire a reverence for God’s creation.

“God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). The human body is God’s greatest

design in the entire physical realm. Most “Christians” would agree with that statement. So, any attempted unnatural marring of the body simply shows disrespect to God and lack of reverence to His creation.

Paul adds, *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own”* (1 Corinthians 6:19)?

So you and I are to *“glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Corinthians 6:20).

We are to reflect God’s thinking and values, and strive to follow His instructions for us carefully and respectfully. *“Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you”* (2 Corinthians 6:17).

That’s the context of Leviticus 19, *“You shall be holy, for me the Lord your God am holy”* (Leviticus 19:2).

A plethora of actions which make one unholy are prohibited in this chapter, such as not revering one’s parents, breaking the Sabbath, idolatry, stealing or dealing falsely, prostituting your daughter, false weights, and making marks or patterns on the skin by pricking it with a needle coated with pigment (tattooing).

God’s genuinely clear with the above scriptures in mind that our bodies should not be marked with tattoos, no matter what our reasoning might be for doing so.

As time marches on society and its culture will become increasingly worse. It won’t reflect God’s culture, His way, or how we as Christians should live.

What will your choice be? Go along to fit in, or follow God’s instruction?

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in

advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Scott Hoefker', with a large, circular scribble to the right of the name.

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