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# TATTOO: The Mark of Rebellion

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## TATTOO: THE MARK OF REBELLION

The Bible, from cover to cover, and over and over, condemns rebellion. The Lord God considered rebellion so serious  He compared rebellion to witchcraft. And may I remind you, witchcraft was punishable by death!

"For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, . . . "

1 Samuel 15:23

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

Exodus 22:18

**And if there s one message the tattoo cries out  loud and clear  it s rebellion.**

Throughout history tattoos have symbolized rebellion. There s nothing normal about a tattoo. A tattoo screams of unabashed rebellion and deviancy.

Every tattoo book, and every article, I researched, both old and new, openly affirmed the deliberate rebellion symbolized by the tattoo. Book after book, article after article, sung the same song  tattoos are open rebellion. It s worth noting  all the following quotes are from pro tattoo books.

"Since body art is still not mainstream, having marks on your body that you put there on purpose shows the world **your rebellious and unconventional nature**".

(Jean-Chris Miller, *The Body Art Book : A Complete, Illustrated Guide to Tattoos, Piercings, and Other Body Modifications*, p. 32)

"In this culture, **a tattooed person is still looked at as a rebel**, as someone who has very visibly stepped **out of the bounds of normal society**, . . ."

(Michelle Delio, *Tattoo: The Exotic Art of Skin Decoration*, p. 75)

**"Unquestionably tattoos are socially unacceptable."**

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 179)

## TATTOO: A MARK OF DISGRACE OR REPROACH

Steve Gilbert, in the very popular, pro-tattoo book, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, documents that even the word "tattoo" means ". . . a mark of disgrace or reproach".

"The Latin word for tattoo was stigma and the original meaning is reflected in modern dictionaries. Among the definitions of stigma listed by Webster are a prick with a pointed instrument, . . . a distinguishing mark cut into the flesh of a slave or a criminal, **and a mark of disgrace or reproach.**"  
(Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 15)

In fact, for most of its slimy history the tattoo was used to mark the criminal, adulterers, traitors, deserters, the deviant and outcast. The tattoo was a dreaded mark of reproach and disgrace.

"Adultery, also, was punished in this way [tattooed] in some parts of Britain, and bad characters were marked BC. . . In 1717, branding was abolished in the Army and **replaced with tattooing.** . . with the letter D deserter"  
(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 162)

## TATTOO: THE MARK OF THE SIDESHOW FREAK

As late as the early 1900s, the tattoo was so far "out of bounds" of normal, civilized society, the tattooed was mainly found freaking people out as an attraction in the circus "freak show".

"By 1897 tattooing had reached the United States, **where it immediately became a circus sideshow attraction.**"  
(Laura Reybold, *Everything you need to know about the dangers of tattooing and body percing*, p. 17)

"The popularity of tattooing during the latter part of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century **owed much to the circus.**"  
(Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 135)

## TATTOO: THE MARK OF INDECENCY

Tattoos are so rebellious and disgusting to most people they compare a tattoo to filthy pornography "dirty, indecent and subversive to morality".

"In a society that considers nudity as dirty, indecent, and subversive or morality . . . **it is not surprising**

**that decorations to the body are allocated to the same category."**

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 179)

Even in the barbaric and immoral ancient Greek and Rome, the tattoo was considered "barbaric" and used primarily to mark slaves and criminals. It's interesting, they promoted slavery and other forms of depravity but felt tattoos were barbaric. What does that testify of today's barbaric Christian tattooing craze? Is the next step in Christian depravity slavery?

"Respectable Greeks and Romans did not indulge in decorative tattooing, **which they associated with barbarians**. The Greeks, however, learned the technique from the Persians, and used it to mark slaves and criminals so they could be identified if they tried to escape."

(Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 15)

## TATTOO: THE MARK OF DEPRAVITY

Criminals, drug addicts, sex perverts and social outlaws are the overwhelming majority of the tattooed. Statistics, both old and recent, clearly reveal tattoos are largely worn by the rebellious and deviant.

**"In addition to being a form of self-destruction, the tattoo seals the wearer off from the rest of normal society forever.** It's not all that surprising to note that the largest number of tattooed in Japan belong to the underworld, and **in America tattoos are most prevalent either in jail or hard rock bands.**"

(Danny Sugerman, *Appetite for Destruction: the Days of Guns N' Roses*, p. 40)

"It was ancient Japanese tradition **to tattoo convicted criminals**. . . "

(Laura Reybold, *Everything you need to know about the dangers of tattooing and body piercing*, p. 15)

"A study of young offenders on the West Coast of America **concluded that delinquents tattoo themselves significantly more often than non-delinquents**, and that the inclination develops at an early age without any thought for the future."

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 113)

"In the Borstal institutions [criminals] it has been estimated **that the incidence of tattooing can be as high as 75 per cent.**"

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 113)

Comprehensive studies performed in Denmark, revealed the following enlightening statistics concerning tattoos:

- 42% of inmates for short-term detention were tattooed
- 60% of inmates for young men with behavior difficulties

- 72% of prisons for young men
  - 52% of prisons population
- (Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 114)

"The same Denmark studies also disclosed less than 4.8 in the general population were tattooed."  
(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 114)

Investigations by law enforcement officials also came to the conclusion that:

**"the presence of ornamental body tattoos could serve to indicate the existence of personality disorders which are liable to manifest themselves in criminal behaviour".**  
(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 117)

**"Therefore, many authorities link tattooing with aggression, i.e. anti-authoritarianism, and it cannot be disputed that gangs and delinquents, juvenile or otherwise, display massive evidence of aggression".**  
(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 114)

According to study after study, a tattoo so personifies and establishes a "rebellious atmosphere" that one of the most important steps in prison rehabilitation is the removal of the tattoo. According to many serious studies, a tattoo is linked so strong to criminal behavior and delinquency, that without question, the mere decoration of the tattoo inherently contributes to the criminal behavior pattern.

**"This [tattoos] is one of the problems behind prison rehabilitation.** Hence the reason why some plastic surgeons associated with prison **service are prepared to spend an enormous amount of time removing tattoos**, especially those on exposed areas. . ."  
(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 181)

The famous architect, Adolf Loos, who also studied the connection to tattoos and crime, blatantly wrote:

"Tattooed men who are not behind bars **are either latent criminals or degenerate aristocrats.** If someone who is tattooed dies in freedom, then he does so a few years **before he would have committed murder**".  
(Adolf Loos, 1962 *Ornament und Verbrechen*. Samtliche Schriften, edited by F. Gluck. Vienna: Herold, 1962, cited at [www.into-you.co.uk/contents/misc.htm](http://www.into-you.co.uk/contents/misc.htm))

## TATTOO: THE MARK OF PERVERSION

Studies have linked tattoos to homosexuality, lesbianism, and gross sexual perversion.

"To be fair to those who maintain that tattooing is linked to homosexuality, investigations conducted in a New Zealand Borstal for girls revealed **that of the 60 per cent tattooed, 90 per cent admitted to lesbian behaviour** during corrective treatment. . .

Yet further analysis indicated a ratio of aggression to the number of tattoos, **and that the most heavily tattooed girls were unstable and insecure and tended to take the masculine role in their sex encounters."**

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 87)

"[associated with tattoos] Among these conditions Raspa cited: impulsiveness, low self esteem, lack of self control, **homosexual orientation, sexual sadomasochism, bondage, fetishism, bisexuality, lesbianism**, antisocial personality, borderline personality disorder, schizotypal personality disorder, mania and bipolar disorder, and schizophrenia."

(Raspa, Robert F. and John Cusack 1990, *Psychiatric Implications of Tattoos*, American Family Physician. 41: p. 1481 cited in Gilbert, Steve, *Tattoo History: A Source Book*, p. 159)

## TATTOO: AND PERSONALITY DISORDERS

Studies also show that "self-inflicted" tattoos are frequently associated with people with personality disorders, troubled backgrounds and self-mutilation tendencies.

"Evidence indicates that it is **the mere presence of the tattoo**, not its artistic content, that correlates with certain diagnoses. **Thus, any tattoo can be viewed as a warning sign that should alert the practicing physician to look for underlying psychiatric conditions."**

(Raspa, Robert F. and John Cusack 1990, *Psychiatric Implications of Tattoos*, American Family Physician. 41: p. 1483)

". . . **studies suggests that people with personality disorders frequently have multiple small tattoos.** . . ."

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 115)

Research clearly indicates ". . . the presence of tattooing was often indicative of **a deprived and troubled background,. . ."**

(Ronald Scutt, *Art, Sex and Symbol*, 1974, p. 117)

## BUT WHAT ABOUT THE TATTOOS OF TODAY?

I know what some are thinking. . . Sure, in the past tattoos were linked to criminals, depravity, and immoral behavior  but not today.

Today, the tattoo is worn by celebrities, athletes, politicians and business people. It's adorned in high fashion mags and sports mags. There's absolutely no data to even remotely suggest tattoos are linked to criminal or immoral behavior. No sir. Today's tattoo is high-fashion and cool.

### **Oh. . . Really?**

A very comprehensive study and analysis of tattoos, was recently published in April, 2001. The study was performed by Dr. Timothy Roberts, a pediatrician at the University of Rochester Children's Hospital. The detailed analysis was taken from a study of 6072 young people, ages 11 to 21. From all over the United States. From all different ethnic groups. From all economic and social backgrounds. In other words, very thorough and reliable data models were constructed for the study. In fact, this study is probably the most comprehensive and conclusive analysis of tattoos ever conducted.

According to the study, today's tattooed young people:

- Are nearly four times more likely to engage in sexual intercourse
- Over two times more likely to experience alcohol related problems
- Nearly two times more likely to use illegal drugs
- Over two times more likely to express violent behavior
- Over two times more likely to drop out of high school

Dr. Roberts writes, that the results of the study reveal:

"Tattooing in adolescents was **significantly associated** with **sexual intercourse, substance use, violence** and school problems in bivariate analyses and in logistic regressions adjusting for sociodemographic factors and peer substance use."

(Timothy A. Roberts, M.D. and Sheryl A. Ryan, M.D., *Tattooing and High-Risk Behavior in Adolescents*, Division of Adolescent Medicine, Strong Children's Research Center, University of Rochester School of Medicine, Rochester, NY)

Dr. Roberts, writes in the "conclusion" of the study that tattoos "**have strong associations with high-risk behaviors in adolescents**"

"Conclusion: **Permanent tattoos have strong associations with high-risk behaviors in adolescents.** The presence of a tattoo during examination of an adolescent should prompt in-depth assessment for high-risk behaviors."

(Timothy A. Roberts, M.D. and Sheryl A. Ryan, M.D., *Tattooing and High-Risk Behavior in Adolescents*, Division of Adolescent Medicine, Strong Children's Research Center, University of Rochester School of Medicine, Rochester, NY)

It is worth mentioning, Dr. Roberts, himself has a tattoo. And before the study, Dr. Roberts admittedly believed that people with tattoos were unfairly stereotyped. One of his purposes of the study was to prove that point. After the overwhelming results, Dr Roberts, admitted, **"I was more than a little surprised at the result."**

After evaluating the data, Dr. Roberts says, "A tattoo is a sign that doctors, parents, teachers ought to be asking about the teenager's behaviour."

## **BUT WASN'T JESUS A REBEL?**

I hear this "rebel-party-line" from Christians:

*"Hey dude, yea man, I'm a rebel just like Jesus. Yea, man, He was the real rebel. He rebelled against the system, man. Yea, man, He's the ultimate rebel. Man, like, that's why I wear my tattoos I'm rebelling against the system."*

Heavily tattooed, Sonny of the "Rastafarianism-Christianity-AND-God-Knows-What-Else" punk-rap-metal rock band P.O.D. claims Jesus Christ was the first rebel and the "first punk rocker"!

"We believe that Jesus was **the first rebel**. He was the **first punk rocker** going against all the rest of it"  
Sonny, P.O.D.  
(<http://www.shoutweb.com/interviews/pod0700.phtml>)

Let's get something straight! The Lord Jesus Christ was NOT A REBEL! The Bible is very clear. The Lord Jesus Christ was **OBEDIENT unto death even the death of the cross!**

Phil. 2:8

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, **and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Even in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing that every wicked, abominable sin committed in history was going to be placed upon Him (2 Cor. 5:17), knowing that He was going to drink the cup of wrath of God, and in great agony, His sinless sweat was dropping as it were great drops of blood even then, Thank God, Thank God **HE DID NOT REBEL! As He prayed ". . .not my will, but thine, be done."**

42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: **nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.**

43 And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44 And being **in an agony he prayed more earnestly:** and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood

falling down to the ground.  
Luke 22:42-44

Yes. The Lord Jesus Christ was  against  the world and the system  but it was because the world was the REBEL  not the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank God  He was OBEDIENT to the will of God. The world, the flesh and the devil REBELLED and is REBELLING against the Word of God. Just like anyone that disgraces themselves with a "God-forbidden" tattoo.

Oh my friend, aren't you glad that Jesus Christ was NOT a rebel. That He was OBEDIENT unto His Father's will. Aren't you glad that Sonny of P.O.D. is so wrong. If Jesus Christ REBELLED, one second, one thought, one sin, there would be no hope. Aren't you glad Jesus Christ loved you so much that He died for you on Calvary?

**Have you ever received the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour?**

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**NEXT PAGE >> [TATTOO'S DEADLY LITTLE SECRET](#)**

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- [TO TATTOO OR NOT TO TATTOO](#)
  - [TATTOO: THE CUP OF DEVILS](#)
  - [TATTOO: THE MARK OF REBELLION](#)
  - [TATTOOS & THE BIBLE](#)
  - [TATTOO: THE MARK OF BLOOD](#)
  - [TATTOO: THE MARK OF DEATH](#)
  - [TATTOO'S DEADLY LITTLE SECRET](#)
  - [TATTOO: THE MARK OF REGRET](#)
- 

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