



Soul Tattoo

What Is a Soul Tattoo?

I have never seen a K-pop band in concert. I have never given someone mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I have never gotten a body piercing. I have never tasted a cocktail. I have never smoked marijuana or used an illegal drug. I have never ridden on a motorcycle. I have never driven a sports car or even bought a new car. I have never gone up in a helicopter or purchased a gun. I haven't shaved my head, gone to Spain, or grown a moustache that looked decent. I have never had my wisdom teeth pulled and I have never posted on Instagram, Twitter or TikTok. I have never bungie jumped or parachuted. I have never had a tattoo...at least not one on my body.

Although the Apostle John does not use the term, "soul tattoo", he does describe an experience that sounds an awful lot like one. **What you have heard from the beginning is to remain in you. If what you have heard from the beginning remains in you, then you will remain in the Son and in the Father. And this is the promise that he himself made to us: eternal life. I have written these things to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you. As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, remain in him.** (1 John 2: 24-27 CSB) We will set our sights on one particular element to this passage that is crucial to contemplate.

Consider the term, "anointing". You may be unaware of how often anointing is mentioned in the Bible and the great variety of ways it is used. Objects used in worship were anointed. **When Moses finished setting up the tabernacle, he anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings. He also anointed and consecrated the altar and all its utensils.** (Numbers 7: 1 NIV) The high priest was anointed. **He (Moses) poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him.** (Leviticus 8: 12 NIV) Kings were anointed. **Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.** (2 Samuel 2: 4 NIV) Prophets were anointed. **...and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.** (1 Kings 19: 16b NIV) Anointing was the physical act of pouring oil on someone or something in order to indicate this is for God's service dedicated to His glory. It was a special sign of being set apart to God, whether it was a lampstand, priest, or king.

Later, the spiritual reality of anointing came into focus. The prophet Isaiah speaks of anointing in a new way. Voicing the words of the Messiah, a connection is made between anointing and the Spirit of God. **The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.** (Isaiah 61: 1 NIV) Now we see something only hinted at before in Scripture but revealed here. Anointing is the actual work of the Spirit of God. Human anointing based on God's directing is with some physical substance like oil. God's anointing is by the entrance of the Spirit of God into the one anointed. In this case, it is the Messiah who has the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord on Him and thus he preaches the good news. Jesus read this verse from the Scriptures and told those there in the synagogue that the fulfillment of it was in Him. He was the one anointed by the Spirit of the Lord being on Him. Peter the Apostle understood this clearly. **You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.** (Acts 10: 37-38 NIV)

Anointing, when it is done by God Himself is the work of the Holy Spirit taking over the inside of the one God has called to Him. It is the mark of salvation. **Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.** (2 Corinthians 1: 21-22 NIV) Paul clarifies this thought in his letter to the Ephesians. **And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.** (Ephesians 1: 13-14 NIV) Think of it this way. The anointing results in a seal, a soul tattoo if you will, that proves you have salvation and that you belong to God fully. The Holy Spirit is that tattoo, that mark of the promise you have eternal life. Anointing, once Christ gave us the Holy Spirit means one thing now. Everything else is a symbol of it. Anointing means the Holy Spirit is in you; it is the Holy Spirit and you as a new creation. God Himself is literally part of you.

What this means for you is incredible! Consider this declaration of John again. **As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you don't need anyone to teach you. Instead, his anointing teaches you about all things and is true and is not a lie; just as it has taught you, remain in him.** (1 John 2: 27 CSB) There has been quite a bit of discussion of exactly what John is saying here. He is obviously not telling you that if you have the Holy Spirit you never need to learn anything, that no one has any insight to offer you. What he is letting you know is that you have the supernatural Spirit of God in you, ready to direct you, inspire you, stop you and teach you all through your life. There is not a moment when the Holy Spirit is unavailable to you. The world is irrational and the chaos in life is unavoidable. When you have put your faith in Christ for salvation, there is never a moment that you cannot turn to the Holy Spirit to guide you. He may remind you of a Bible verse, something Jesus has said, a conversation you had with a Christian or a comment made in a sermon and suddenly you will know your next step. Someone may show up who can help you or a problem you face slips away.

Now I want to share something quite personal with you. You have to be in tune with God, aligned to Him if you are going to enjoy the great gift of the Holy Spirit being in you. I can go to an opera and get nothing out of it. The music does almost nothing for me and the majestic talent of the vocalists and instrumentalists barely register in me. In a sense I don't hear the music because the nuances to it I miss. A rock band, however, fills my senses and I catch the details of what they do, good or bad. If you do not stay aligned with Christ, you will miss much of what the Holy Spirit has for you. All the help, encouragement, support will go right past you. As the expression goes, "In one ear and out the other." If though you obey Christ each step of the way and look for Him to guide you, to teach you, to work in your heart, you will be amazed by how wonderful it is to have the Holy Spirit anointing you and living in you. Imagine having Albert Einstein whispering in your ear as you take your physics test. Now consider having the Lord Almighty within you showing you the way in your relationships, in your personal problems, in your goals and priorities and the everyday decisions you make. You have the strength of the Holy Spirit to keep you from falling into temptation and wrecking your life. You have Him there to lighten your load and bring you peace. Dive in all the way and be fully engaged with the Holy Spirit. Don't miss any opportunities to be led by Him.