

A Sermon on the #TaoFu of Storytelling

Sermon by Rev. Minister Angela Smith of COPE for August 1st, 2021 (and beyond)

Some call me evil. Oxford Languages via Google.com defines “evil” as “a manifestation of profound immorality and wickedness, especially in people's actions” and “(of a smell or sight) extremely unpleasant.” I bathe and people do not seem offended by my scent nor my appearance. So, I can only venture to guess the former definition is intended rather than the latter without more information from those who call me evil. I do welcome feedback and willingly ask and answer questions. So does Jeff Bezos and people say he’s evil and has an evil laugh. Sources: <https://www.wibc.com/blogs/hammer-and-nigel/jeff-bezos-the-more-money-he-makes-the-more-evil-his-laugh/> and https://www.reddit.com/r/TrueOffMyChest/comments/gsvimo/jeff_bezos_is_considered_evil_but_everybody_is/. I’ve publicly admitted to having a wicked sense of humor, but I was employing the double entendre where wicked means good like in 1980s' slang. If you said something was “Wicked boss!” it would mean totally awesome or bitchin' in 1980s' slang too. I admit to the wicked sense of humor in this Youtube: <https://youtu.be/dFUP8tDObPw> But otherwise I consider myself good at times challenged by evil.

Oxford Languages via Google.com defines “immorality” as “the state or quality of being immoral; wickedness.” And, the same source defines “immoral” as “not conforming to accepted standards of morality.” The definition for “morality” is “the extent to which an action is right or wrong.” The legal and therefore publicly recognized definition of “wrong” is “A violation, by one individual, of another individual's legal rights... The Criminal Law is charged with preventing and punishing public wrongs. Public wrongs are violations of public rights and duties that affect the whole community...A private wrong, also called a civil wrong, is a violation of public or private rights that injures an individual and consequently is subject to civil redress or compensation. A civil wrong that is not based on breach of contract is a tort.” Source: <https://legal-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Wrong>

I’m honest and admit fallibility (humble) so John 8:44 doesn’t apply to me. If it did, then Deuteronomy 14:1-2 would not I imagine. So, based on my understanding of scripture, I’m honest and more virtuous than not, therefore biblically not evil. So, they can’t mean evil in the biblical sense. Do they mean it in the legal sense?

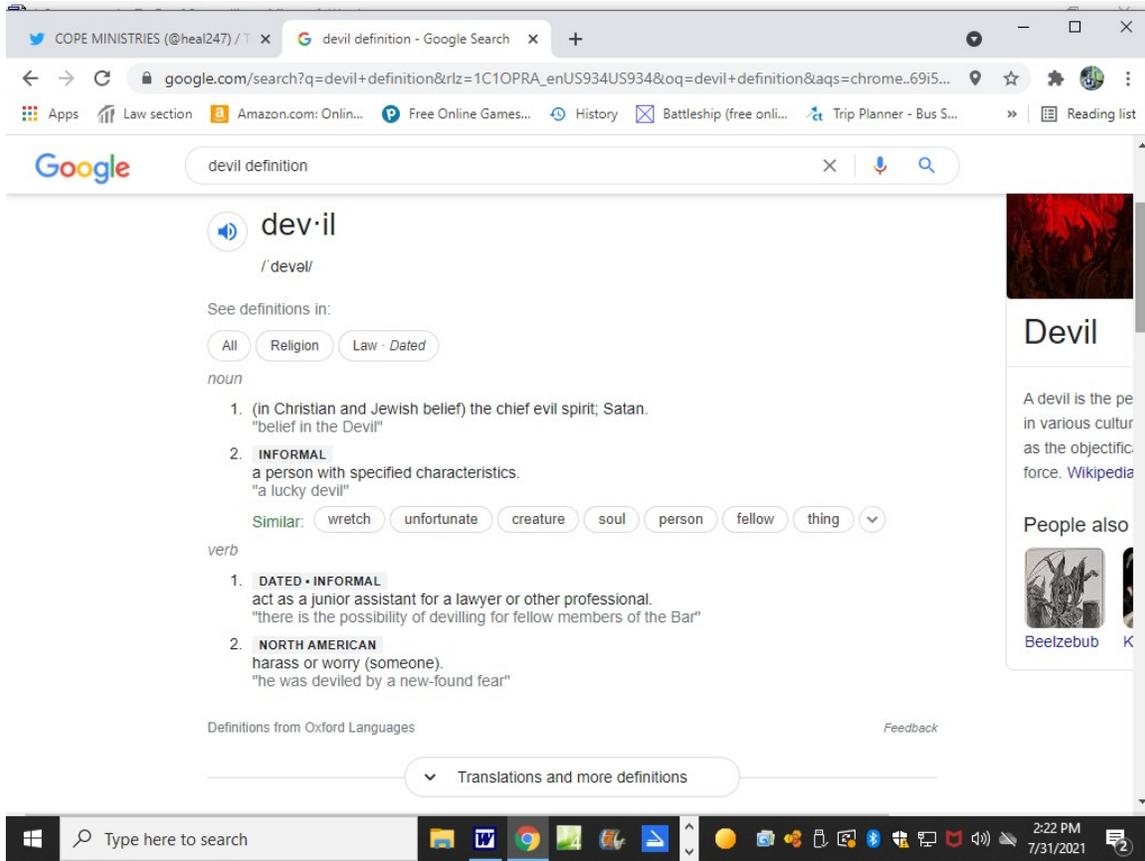
Am I evil or did I do something wrong? I admit to occasional wrongdoing, but I’m righteous at least 90% of the time. I believe I’m 10% vicious or tempted by vice. Well, some things are up to God and some things are up to the Justice System dependent on jurisdiction. If anyone were 100% virtue wouldn't there necessarily be a balancing force that was 100% vice? This is why I’m okay with being 10% vice. Maybe if everyone was a little naughty no one would be totally evil. I can also imagine being 100% virtuous and believe it is possible I may need to defend myself so manifest a partner or opponent with which to spar to prepare to protect myself and all of creation.

I can almost guarantee the people who call me evil never thought about it half as much as I have so thought. God has not smited me but I do not consider that evidence of my goodness, just of God's patience. To my knowledge my freedom is fairly unrestrained and I've never been convicted of a crime nor required to pay any damages in tort.

It would be pretty shallow for someone to take offense to my scent or my appearance. If they lost their senses of smell and sight, would they appreciate it more if the loss was only temporary and I was the first sight to be seen upon recovery? Perhaps we'll never know.

Is it possible they don't understand the language? It would explain a lot of misunderstandings if I were certain they lacked English comprehension. But, I did admit to having a wicked sense of humor and 10% capacity to be tempted to vice or wrongdoing. So, I am 10% evil and that means some are not all wrong, just mostly. And, if they are mostly wrong then are they mostly evil? If they are ignorant, then they are mistaken and forgiven. If they are liars, John 8:44. Should I be scared of and/or for them? Would prioritizing English comprehension in education in English speaking countries help? If not, then I think some criminals have been projecting which makes total sense if they are malignant narcissists (criminal minds) and only self-reference in some sort of solipsist nightmare where to the extent I give everyone the benefit of the doubt and usually enough rope to hang themselves, they do the opposite and assume we're more alike than not. Context matters. That's why there are recognized defenses at law for otherwise seemingly wrongful actions.

Also, devil may at times refer to a lawyer's apprentice and I may so qualify given I passed the California State Bar "Baby Bar" exam. However, you'll see below that that definition is both dated and informal. And, depending on the #TaoFu of that, one is more true than the other at this time. But, I'm the sole proprietor of the corporation sole that is the Church Of Philosophical Exploration (COPE) Ministries. My only superior in this position is God in terms of employment, which is only possible because of the first amendment freedom of religion also known as the basis of all laws of the USA. So, if calling me a devil or evil, please clearly communicate how you mean it and as much as possible use the proper tone and affect to help clarify your meaning. I'll do my best to do the same as always.



END

The above is an example of first person narrative storytelling. The only meditative question for you to ponder if you wish this week is: "What does it all mean?"

For those interested in starting #TaoFu Self-Defense Exercises, please see <https://www.cope.church/taofu.htm> and begin at any time.

There are opportunities to send messages, receive mystery bonus blessings, and more with or without donating available now on our "Pass the Basket" page at <https://www.cope.church/basket.htm> . Thank You.

"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." John 8:32 KJV Willful blindness is an abomination.

COPE accepts Feedback, critical and complimentary. Learn more at <https://www.cope.church/feedback.htm> . For the sake of keeping myself and others humble, a sense of humor is welcome on all sides.

For More About COPE and the HEAL Mission, see:

<https://www.cope.church> and <https://www.heal-online.org>