

What does the New Testament mean by “evil”?

There are two main families of words, easily separated by number in a concordance.

Evil (4190): bad, evil, harm, malicious, wicked

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew)

- 5:37, 6:13 From the evil one
- 5:39 An evil person...strikes you
- 5:45 The evil and the good...the just and the unjust
- 6:23 If your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness
- 7:11 If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children
- 7:17 A corrupt tree bears evil fruit
- 7:18 A good tree cannot bear evil fruit

- Note the development of the word through this one lesson.

- What is the source of evil deeds?
- Is evil permanent?
- Is evil consistent?

- Romans 12:9 Abhor what is evil.
- Galatians 1:4 Deliver us from this present evil age.
- Ephesians 5:16 Redeeming the time for the days are evil
- 1 Thessalonians 5:22 Abstain from every sort of evil.
- 2 Timothy 3:13 Evil men and imposters
- Hebrews 3:12 Beware of an evil heart of unbelief
- Hebrews 10:22 Hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience
- James 4:16 All such boasting is evil
- 1 John 3:12 His works were evil

- Did the authors assume that the readers knew what was evil?
- Was a definition of evil offered?
- Were lists of evil deeds presented?
- What conclusions can we draw?

Another family of “evil” words (2549, 2551, 2554, 2556, 2559, 2560): evil, malice, wickedness.

- Matthew 24:48 Parable of the evil servant
- Matthew 27:23 What evil has He done?
- Mark 7:21 Out of the heart proceeds evil thoughts
- Mark 9:39 Cannot soon speak evil of Me
- Luke 16:25 Lazarus received evil things
- John 18:23 If I have spoken evil...
- Acts 9:13 How much evil he has done
- Acts 23:5 You shall not speak evil of a ruler
- Romans 1:30 Inventors of evil
- Romans 2:9 Tribulation...on all who do evil

- Romans 3:8 Let us do evil that good may come
- Romans 7:19 But the evil I will not, I do
- Romans 7:21 Evil is present in me
- Romans 9:11 Having done neither good nor evil
- Romans 12:17 – 21, 1 Peter 3:9 – 12 Do not repay evil for evil
- Romans 13:3 Rulers are not a terror for good works but for evil
- Romans 16:19 Wise in good; simple in evil
- 2 Corinthians 13:7 Do no evil
- James 1:13 God cannot be tempted by evil
- James 3:8 The tongue is an unruly evil
- 3 John 11 Do not imitate what is evil

- Is there a distinct difference between the two groups of words?
- Did the authors assume that the readers knew what was evil?
- Was a definition of evil offered?
- Were lists of evil deeds presented?
- What conclusions can we draw?

- Hebrews 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are perfect, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.
- Do people have complicated reasons why what seems evil is really good?
- How do we keep from deceiving and being deceived?
- How does evil continue?
- Is evil powerful?