

Apostolic Decrees of Justice By **Todd Bentley**

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This article entitled Apostolic Decrees of Justice outlines God's mandate for this season and revelation which illumines the power of decrees and proclamations in the heavenly court setting. You will learn about the heavenly courts, activity in God's throne room, and how it affects you.

Apostolic declarations, that are commissioned in heaven and sent by God, have tremendous authority to bring about His justice. The Lord will release significant breakthroughs when we declare, decree, and proclaim His will and His word. An apostolic declaration is a powerful weapon that shatters destructive plans of the enemy! It's even like a pre-emptive strike!

DECLARE, DECREE, PROCLAIM&#eac&eac GOD'S MANDATE FOR THE YEAR - ISAIAH 61:2

God began speaking to me about apostolic declarations at the beginning of the year. He highlighted this key scripture, "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:2). Next, He revealed that one of His (five) mandates for 2004 and beyond is to declare, decree, and proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, the year of the Lord's favor, or Jubilee. He is anointing us to carry out this mandate! When we make a decree like Moses and the prophet Isaiah, it's like we're saying, "Hear O heavens and earth...let heaven and earth give witness!" "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and hear O earth, the words of my mouth" (Deuteronomy 32:1). "Hear O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the LORD has spoken..." (Isaiah 1:2)

JUBILEE AND FAVOR

Did you know that Jubilee means total deliverance for us, cancellation of debts for each of us and our family, and liberation from any kind of a bondage, taskmaster, or oppression over our lives! In the anointing, we can proclaim "Jubilee!" and set into motion, like the laws of gravity, a power, or a force of power that causes everything in our lives to begin to come into divine order. Now, that's an anointing! We don't have to wait for the year of Jubilee! When God's word is declared, the angels of heaven act upon that decree, and a supernatural endowment of power comes into our lives that we never had before.

There's more! When the Spirit of the Lord God is upon us to proclaim "Favor!" everything around us will begin to change because of the Favor of God. One moment we don't have this power, and then in the next moment, under the anointing, we can proclaim, "Favor, Favor, Favor!" Suddenly, a download of favor comes that was taking two minutes before, like a tangible "coat of many colors," dropping out of heaven as an anointing. We will see the results!

Did you know that the same word for 'grace' is 'favor' and both words can be used in the same way? How many of us would just love a spirit of grace to come upon us today? God not only wants to give us favor, He wants to release the spirit of grace upon us, through a supernatural endowment of power.

GROWING IN FAVOR WITH GOD

It seems like everyone is trying to get favor, but there are principles involved that release favor upon our lives. First of all, God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6). Listen guys! God loves everyone the same, but the one who loves and seeks Him the most, is the one He will favor the most. God loves the wickedest, "wrest sinner just as much as He loves us, but more of His favor is released to the one who deeply loves Him, who hungers and thirsts for Him. When we fail to seek God passionately, our favor level might not be the same as other believers who are pursuing the Lord with all their heart. Jesus said to "...seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7). We can actually grow in favor by obedience and by diligently seeking Him.

When we think about getting the Favor of God, so often we think it's a process of 'getting into' the favor. But levels of favor grow. Jesus grew in favor with God and men (Luke 2:52). When our favor with God grows, our favor with man grows.

King David's life of devotion to the Lord attracted the heart and favor of God even though at times there were some areas of his life that were quite messy. It was like God looked at David and said, "But this guy has a heart of passion for Me!" When David became captain over about 400 discontented men, the favor of God became evident, and this favor grew until the people made him King over Judah and all of Israel (1 Samuel 22:2; 2 Samuel 2:4).

So, growing in favor with God hinges on our intense pursuit of Him. When God sees our love for Him and our determination to chase after Him with all our heart, He not only releases favor over our lives, He releases an anointing to proclaim "Favor!"

DAY OF VINDICATION

You know, there's more than Jubilee and favor coming! Our day of vindication is coming, too! Now, let's go back in Isaiah to, "proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isaiah 61:2). The second part of that verse is to declare and decree the day of the vengeance of our God. He will release an anointing upon us so that we can actually call court into session and call heaven to be our witness, when there is injustice. It's an anointing to declare God's vindication (Definition - vindication: defending against criticism or censure (Webster's Dictionary)). We can access the heavenly court system where the Holy Ghost presides as our advocate and counselor in matters concerning our lives, destiny, inheritance, and death.

How many of us would like God to take up our cause right now? There are circumstances in our lives - sickness, disease, death, poverty, bondage, oppression, false accusations - that we know are not God's will for us. Yes, we can think of all kinds of injustice, but the Spirit of the Lord is upon us to declare vindication. We know the scripture where God says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord" (Hebrews 10:30), but He has invited us, as saints of God, into a place of the power of the decree.

We can actually approach the heavenly court system, not only to gain justice on our behalf, but also to petition God for divine judgment against our enemies. God will plead the cause of His people, but we have to learn how to ascend the courts of heaven. As children of God we have a right to see injustice removed and it will be removed when we declare and proclaim God's word, His truth. God's word prevails and disarms injustice!

THE HEAVENLY COURT

Now, let's examine some background scriptures so we can more fully understand how our decrees disarm injustice in the heavenly realm.

BACKGROUND

Recently, I prepared an in-depth teaching series on 'encounters with the throne,' after spending an extensive period of time studying 64 scriptures about this topic. Due to time and space limitations here, we will examine just a few of these scriptures in this teaching.

The heavenly court system is known by other names in scripture:

- a) Divine council - Psalm 82:1
- b) Counsel of El (God) - Job 15:8
- c) The Council of Yahweh - Jeremiah 23:18
- d) Council of the holy ones - Psalm 89:7

I'd like to define divine 'council' and divine 'counsel.' When a group meets together like an administrative, advisory, or legislative body for discussion and advice, we call this grouping a council. So, when the heavenly court is in session, the members of the court form a body called the 'divine council.' But, when these members of the divine council listen to the Lord's message and engage in discussion, the members are hearing God's advice and wisdom - His 'divine counsel.'

Below, I will list some of the members of the divine council:

- a) God
- b) The hosts of heaven - also called the stars of heaven. "They fought from the heavens; the stars from their courses fought against Siera." Judges 5:20 (The hosts of heaven include: the angels; the Cherubim and the Seraphim; Michael, the archangel, who is the leader of angels in battle and the archangel over the nation of Israel; and Gabrielle, who brings interpretation of divine revelation concerning times and seasons of the church.)
- c) The cloud of witnesses: the apostles, prophets, and saints of old
- d) The prophets that are alive on the earth, and believers
- e) The twelve disciples who judge the nation of Israel
- f) The 24 elders
- g) Devils

The divine counsel of God is described differently in several places in scripture. The heavenly courts can be found on earth or in heaven, and both the counsel and council of God are always linked to the dwelling place of God. It can happen in the mountain - it can happen in the temple setting:

a) The mount of the congregation: "For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north.'" Isaiah 14:13

b) The holy mountain of God: "You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones." Ezekiel 28:14

c) An earthly picture linked to the tent or tabernacle of God: "Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts; Your eyes will see Jerusalem, a quiet home, a tabernacle that will not be taken down; Not one of its stakes will ever be removed, nor will any of its cords be broken." Isaiah 33:20

THE THRONE ROOM&#eac&eac A GLIMPSE OF THE THRONE

When he comes before the throne in the spirit, the apostle John sees God, sitting on the throne, like jasper stone and sardius in appearance. He sees a beautiful scene of worship (Revelation 4:1-11). Later, in the book of Revelation (chapters five through eight), although the setting remains the same (the very throne of God), the scene changes to a courtroom that releases judgment.

As Christians, we often have a mental picture of two distinct places in heaven: one, the throne room where the saints worship and, two, the courtroom of God where judgments are made. However, in the book of Revelation, it appears that both worship and judgment happen in the same place, just at different times. In the throne room John sees and refers to each member of the Trinity. Firstly, he identifies God as "One sitting on the throne" (Rev. 4:2). Secondly, he describes seven burning lamps which symbolize the Holy Ghost (v. 5). Lastly, we see Jesus Christ revealed in the throne room (Rev. 5) as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, the great overcomer. There it is - the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the throne room!

The prophet Daniel gives one of the best descriptions of the throne room to be found in scripture; both the Ancient of Days and the Son of Man are seen together in their governmental authority:

"I watched till thrones were put in place, and the Ancient of Days was seated; His garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head was like pure wool. His throne was a fiery flame, its wheels a burning fire, a fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9-10

"I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him." Daniel 7:13,14

In the above passage, Daniel identifies the Ancient of Days as the One presiding over judgment and the Son of Man, Jesus Christ, receiving His glorious kingdom. Both Daniel and John describe the presence of the Lamb of God.

Revelation 4, and Ezekiel 1 and 10, both describe the throne, but in two different ways. The apostle John refers to a throne on the ground, on the sea of glass like crystal. On the other hand, in his vision, Ezekiel looks up to the throne through the firmament. He sees the throne, moving on wheels within the wheels and covered in eyes. Again, both prophetic books speak of four living creatures, but in different ways. Although Revelation doesn't speak of a throne with wheels, Ezekiel describes four living creatures that actually create a celestial chariot for the throne to ride on. That's why the throne has wheels. It moves. Did you know the throne of God rides on a chariot with wheels and that the four living creatures actually form part of the chariot that carries the throne? It's a prophetic picture of the Levitical priests who carried the ark of the covenant, which was a symbol and actual sign of God's presence (1 Chronicles 15:2). Where the ark went, so did the presence of God.

Whenever we talk about the throne room we should picture it like the tabernacle of Moses (Exodus chapters 35 to 38) and the temple of Solomon (1 Kings chapters 6 to 8) - all the tabernacle imagery. We can think of every reference to the throne of God as a reference to the ark of God as well - both symbolize the presence of God, the place where God was. Also, both the ark and the throne moved as God's presence moved.

OPEN VISION IN KANSAS

In Kansas City, in November 2003, I experienced an open vision during a prophetic round table. In this vision, I was taken into a court scene in heaven that reminded me of our Canadian parliament when it's in session, with the Speaker of the House and members of parliament present. The scene followed the parliamentary procedure in which members speak in an open forum and discuss policies back and forth until Mr. Speaker says, "Enough!" Then everything goes quiet. He administers the entire session, but he's not the only one active in the proceeding.

Now, our image of God on the throne, in the heavenly court, may be that He is the only participant. But after I was caught up into the throne in heaven, I saw God on His throne flanked on either side by 12 thrones, making a circle, totaling 24 thrones. And then, as I looked beyond this circle, I saw more thrones as far as my eyes could see, arranged in tiers the way seating is set up in a stadium. There were thrones and thrones, and more thrones! In my spirit, I knew that the outer thrones were filled with angels and the cloud of witnesses, also called the cloud of testifiers: apostles and saints of old. They were like a jury. The apostle John reports in the Book of Revelation, "And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them..." (20:4a).

The heavenly court was in session. Then I realized that cherubim, seraphim, and the devil and demons, were a part of this divine council meeting. Below, I will discuss in greater detail one example of demonic involvement in the heavenly court room.

ACTIVITY IN THE THRONE ROOM

The divine council room, also called the heavenly court, is situated in the Throne Room. Remember, it's a place where judgments are decided upon, but it also functions as a throne room of worship. Let's keep in mind that the devil can come before the throne of judgment, bringing accusations against believers, but he doesn't have access to the throne room of worship.

One descriptive scene of demonic involvement in the council room is found in 1 Kings 22:19-23:

Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

This portion of scripture gives us a picture of a court session going on in heaven. Micaiah, the prophet, begins by describing the Lord sitting on His throne, surrounded by the host of heaven. We read that an evil spirit answers the Lord's question: "Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?" The demon comes forward, replying: "I will persuade him...I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of his prophets." Then the Lord gives permission to the evil spirit: "You shall persuade him and also prevail. Go out and do it."

So, even evil spirits, at times, can be a part of the divine council of heaven to accomplish God's will! But evil spirits don't have the last say! We have a part in judgment against our adversary the devil, who is constantly battling against prosperity coming into our lives. Although we need God to bring judgment, He invites us to be involved in the divine counsel concerning our life and death, our Fate and Inheritance.

STANDING IN THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD

As well, past biblical and spiritual leaders had access to the divine council room. Joshua, one such leader, was seen by Zechariah standing before the Lord in the heavenly courts. After Satan's unsuccessful attempt to oppose Joshua and after his filthy garments were replaced by rich robes, here's what the Lord said to him:

"Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'If you will walk in My ways, and if you will keep My command, then you shall also judge My house, and likewise have charge of My courts; I will give you places to walk among these who stand here.'" Zechariah 3:7
Joshua was given access to walk among the heavenly council.

Also, we can see, after examining the life of the prophet, Jeremiah, that he was a godly, righteous man of God who stood in the counsel of the Lord and then pronounced God's judgments. In the following verses, even though God is asking the question: "For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord and has perceived and heard His word?" - we can safely identify Jeremiah as one who stood in the counsel of the Lord while God's judgments were pronounced on the wicked:

"For who has stood in the counsel of the LORD, and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it? Behold, A whitehead of the LORD has gone forth in fury - a violent whirlwind! It will fall violently on the head of the wicked. The anger of the LORD will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart. In the latter days you will understand it perfectly." Jeremiah 23:18-20

In the last verse: "The anger of the Lord will not turn back until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart." The word "hears" also means "counsel."

Now that you've taken a good look at all the action in the Throne Room, you will be ready to learn how to make decrees of justice for your life.

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