Declare vs. Decree

A Biblical and Governmental Distinction Between *Declare* and *Decree*

Scripture makes a meaningful distinction between *declare* and *decree*, even though modern usage often blends the two. Biblically, this distinction is tied to source of authority, function, and legal weight. These are not interchangeable speech-acts.

Understanding this distinction is essential when the Ekklesia gathers as government and intends to enact change.

Governing is not a space for processing or discussion. Preparation and alignment occur before authority is exercised. In the governing moment, words are meant to carry instruction, assign outcome, and release execution. For that reason, it is essential to distinguish between *declaration*, which announces truth, and *decree*, which exercises authority. Using declarative language when the intent is to govern weakens precision and diffuses impact. Decrees, not declarations, are the appropriate speech-act when the Ekklesia enters the room to rule.

DECLARE — Strong's Concordance

Hebrew

- **H5046 – *nagad* -** *to make known, announce, report, tell, declare*

  Emphasis: making information known; disclosure; communication

- **H5608 – *saphar* -** *to recount, relate, rehearse, tell, number*

  Emphasis: recounting or narrating what is already known or done

These words consistently describe communication, testimony, or narration of truth.

Greek

G518 – *apaggellō* - *to announce, report, declare, make known*

Emphasis: reporting information; conveying a message

- **G2605 – *katangellō* -** *to proclaim, announce openly, declare fully*

  Emphasis: public proclamation or announcement

  Again, the emphasis is on communication, not command.

Declare — to announce, testify, make known

©Lisa Knight Windahl. 2026. All rights reserved.

To declare is to state, proclaim, or testify to what is already true, revealed, or established. A declaration does not create law. It reveals or affirms reality.

Declarations speak *from* truth; they do not establish what *shall be*.

Biblically, declaration is rooted in announcement and witness. It is often prophetic, testimonial, or confessional in nature. **It brings truth into the open but does not impose obligation or require compliance.**

Psalm 2:7 illustrates this clearly: *"I will declare the decree of the LORD."*

God issued the decree. The psalmist did not create or enforce it; he announced it. The authority and accountability rest in the decree itself, not in the act of declaring it. The declaration serves as publication and witness.

Other examples reinforce this function: "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so…" (Psalm 107:2)

"They declared the works of God…" (Psalm 64:9)

Functionally, declaration operates much like judicial notice. When a court takes judicial notice, it does not create law or issue judgment. It formally recognizes something already established as fact or law and places it on the record without argument. Judicial notice does not compel obedience or impose remedy. It establishes recognition.

In the same way, declarations place truth on the record. They establish acknowledgment of what God has already said or done. They may serve as a necessary foundation for later action, but they are not the action itself.

Functionally, a declaration states fact and truth, affirms status or reality, serves as testimony and evidence, and becomes part of the record.

A declaration does not compel obedience. It does not issue commands. It does not adjudicate or enforce outcomes. A declaration can be completely true and still be non-operative.

Declarations speak *from* truth. The authority expressed is derived, not originating.

DECREE

Hebrew

- **H2710 – ḥāqaq -** *to enact, inscribe, decree, establish law*

  Emphasis: legislating; engraving law as binding

- **H1504 – gāzar -** *to cut, decide, determine, decree*

©Lisa Knight Windahl. 2026. All rights reserved.

Emphasis: decisive determination; issuing a ruling

Greek

- **G1378 – dogma -** *a decree, ordinance, authoritative decision*

Emphasis: a binding ruling or formal order

These words describe acts of legislation or judgment, not proclamation. A *dogma* is not an idea or statement of belief; it is a binding directive.

Decree — to legislate, establish, command

To decree is to issue a binding decision or command from a place of recognized authority. A decree is not testimony. It is a governmental act.

Biblically, decrees are legal, judicial, and governmental in nature. They establish what *shall be*, not merely what is true. Decrees carry enforcement weight and require jurisdiction, standing, and alignment with the will of the one who holds ultimate authority.

Scripture consistently presents decrees as enforceable rulings: "*You shall also decree a thing, and it will be established for you*…" (Job 22:28) "*The king made a decree, and it was written…*" (Daniel 6:8) "*There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus*…" (Luke 2:1)

In each case, the decree creates enforceable reality, imposes obligation, binds parties, activates consequences, and releases execution.

A decree carries coercive authority. It establishes legal reality and requires compliance.

A declaration announces what is true. A decree establishes what must be obeyed. Declarations state reality. Decrees assign action and outcome.

Jesus <u>declared</u> truth: "*You have heard it said… but I say…"* and *"I am the light of the world."*

He testified to reality and revealed the Father.

But when exercising authority, He <u>decreed</u>: "Be silent." "Come out." "Peace, be still."

He did not *declare* storms to calm. He commanded them.

A declaration can be true and still be non-operative. **A decree is operative because it is an act of governance, not merely an assertion of truth.**

When the Ekklesia "enters the room," judicial notice has already been taken. Scripture has already been searched. Hearing has already occurred. Alignment has already been sought.

***<u>Declaring</u>* <u>tells the truth. *Decreeing* changes what must obey.</u>**

©Lisa Knight Windahl. 2026. All rights reserved.

In civil law, a declaration and a decree (or order/judgment) are categorically different legal acts. They do different things, carry different weight, and trigger different consequences.

A declaration is a formal statement of fact, status, or legal position. It answers the question: "What is true?"

Legally, a declaration states facts or affirms legal status, clarifies rights, relationships, or conditions, places information on the record, and may be evidentiary. However, a declaration does not compel action.

If someone files a declaration saying, "I am the rightful owner," nothing changes by virtue of that statement alone. The declaration may be true, persuasive, even undisputed, but **no one is obligated to act unless the court issues an order.**

A declaration has no enforcement mechanism. It does not authorize coercion. It does not impose penalties. It can support later action, but it is not the action.

That's why a judge does not "*declare*" someone divorced, restrained, sanctioned, or ordered to comply. **Doing so would be legally meaningless.**

A **decree** (or order or judgment), on the other hand, is a **binding act of the court**. It answers the question: "What must now be done or obeyed?"

Legally, a decree creates enforceable obligations, changes legal status, commands or restrains conduct, and authorizes enforcement by the state.

When a court issues a decree, rights vest, duties attach, and consequences follow for noncompliance.

This is why decrees and court orders use operative language like: "IT IS ORDERED AND DECREED…" The decree itself is the source of enforceability.

If a party violates a decree, the court can hold them in contempt, impose sanctions, and enforce through writs or officers.

None of that flows from a declaration.

Scripture and civil law converge on a single, unavoidable conclusion that authority is not exercised through acknowledgment, but through command. Declarations may be truthful and even divinely inspired, yet still lack operative force. **Decrees alone establish enforceable reality.**

This distinction explains why truth, though proclaimed, often remains resisted. The issue is not the accuracy of the message, but the jurisdictional posture of the speaker and the

©Lisa Knight Windahl. 2026. All rights reserved.

function of the words employed. Speaking truth does not automatically constitute governance. Governance requires a lawful act.

The Ekklesia, when functioning as government, is not convened to announce reality but to administer it. The hearing has already occurred. The evidence has already been weighed. Alignment has already been secured. What remains is not testimony, but ruling. In that moment, language must shift from revelatory to legislative, from descriptive to operative.

Declarations are appropriate when truth must be revealed, affirmed, or placed on record. Decrees are required when obedience must be compelled, boundaries established, or outcomes enforced. Treating declaration and decree as the same thing doesn't just weaken results, it weakens authority when it's time to act.

When the Ekklesia gathers, it does not declare what is true. It decrees what must now comply.

Anything less may speak truth, but it will not govern.

©Lisa Knight Windahl. 2026. All rights reserved.