

**Table 13:
Comparison of Temple Dedication
and Covenant Ceremonies**

1 Kings 8:5, 63–64

King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, *sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. . . .*

Solomon offered as *sacrifices of well-being* [zebach shelem]⁵³ to YHWH *twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred twenty thousand sheep*. So the king and all the people of Israel dedicated the house of YHWH. The same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of YHWH; for there he offered the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the fat pieces of the sacrifices of well-being, *because the bronze altar that was before YHWH was too small to receive the burnt offerings and the grain offerings and the fat pieces of the sacrifices of well-being*.

Exodus 24:5–8

He sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings *and sacrificed oxen as offerings of well-being* [zebach shelem] to YHWH. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins and half of the blood he dashed against the altar. Then he *took the book of the covenant*, and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that YHWH has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” *Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people, and said, “See the blood of the covenant that YHWH has made with you in accordance with all these words.”*

In the Solomonic account, YHWH is mediated by king (palace) and priest (temple) to “the assembly of Israel.” From the perspective of the royal court, perhaps we are to hear that the presence of elders, tribal heads, and leaders of the fathers’ houses represents “all the people.” The Solomonic assembly appears to exclude clan (*mishpachah*) leaders, who are never referred to in 1–2 Kings. The “clan” was the basic glue of the network of extended families of rural Israelites.⁵⁴ Solomon’s empire was constructed to disempower this traditional social unit, working instead only with representatives of “higher level” structures.

In Exodus, however, Moses leads by inviting people to “meet God” directly. They experience the powerful smoke, fire, shaking, and noise in their own bodies, directly from the mountain. This contrast reveals how the

53. The phrase is found forty-nine times in the Hebrew Bible, but only here in the monarchy narrative *and* only here in Exodus; cf. Exod. 29:28.

54. *Mishpachah* is used over 300 times in the MT, 185 of those in the torah, of which *only one* is in Deuteronomy. See also Howard-Brook (2001), 75–77, on the role of the *mishpachah* as a key component of Israel’s social fabric.