

Handout 1: Exodus Lesson 12

The main elements in the Rite of Covenant Ratification at Sinai:

1. An altar was built to receive the sacrifices.
2. Twelve standing stones were erected to symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel.
3. Animals for whole burnt offerings and communion offerings were sacrificed.
4. The terms of the covenant were read to the people who swore an oath to keep the covenant.
5. The covenant mediator (Moses) sprinkled the blood of sacrifice on the altar and over the people.
6. The covenant mediator (Moses) invoked the words of the covenant formula: *This is the blood of the covenant which Yahweh has made with you, entailing all these stipulations.*
7. The covenant mediator (Moses) and the representatives of the covenant ate a sacred meal (communion meal) in the presence of God.

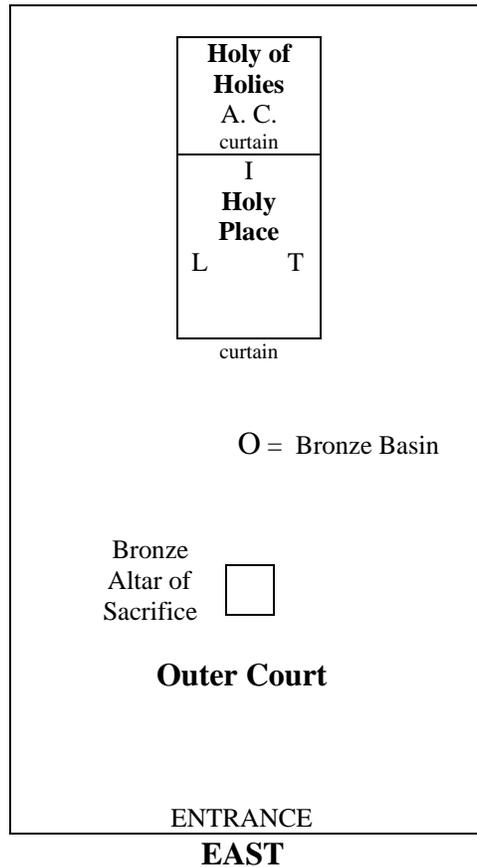
Ritual sacrifices, oath swearing, and the eating of a shared meal or sacred meal in God's presence are all elements of covenant formation that are found in earlier parts of the biblical narrative:

- The ritual sacrifice of animals was part of the covenant formation with Abram in Genesis chapter 15.
- The account of the binding of Isaac combines ritual sacrifice and oath swearing in the third part of Abraham's covenant formation (Gen 22:13-14, 16-18).
- Isaac's covenant treaty with King Abimelech involved sacrifice, a shared meal, and oath swearing (Gen 26:26-33).
- Jacob formed a covenant treaty with Laban that was sealed by ritual sacrifice, oath swearing, and a shared meal (Gen 31:43-54).
- In the Passover, which was a precursor to the covenant at Sinai, the Passover lambs and kids were sacrifices and a sacred meal eaten (Ex 12:xx)
- After Jethro's declaration of belief in Yahweh whole burnt offerings and communion sacrifices are offered and a sacred meal was shared with the Israelites "in the presence of God" (Ex 17:12).

These elements of covenant formation and covenant renewal are repeated in other parts of the Pentateuch narrative and in the Bible books recounting the history of Israel. For example:

- In the investiture ceremony of the covenant of the priesthood established with Aaron and his sons: sacrifice was made, the blood of the sacrifice was poured out at the altar, some of the blood was applied to Aaron and his sons, and a sacred meal was eaten in the presence of God. This rite of priestly investiture was to be repeated in every generation of priests (Ex 29:1-35).
- The celebration of the Passover sacrifice and the sacred feast of the victim on the first day of Unleavened Bread before leaving Sinai and after entering the Promised Land were acts of covenant renewal for the children of Israel just as every sacred meal in remembrance of those feasts became a ritual of covenant commitment for another year (Num 9:1-5; Josh 5:10-12; Lk 22: 20; also Mt 26:17-29).
- Ritual sacrifice followed by a shared meal is found in 1 Samuel 11:15 when Saul was affirmed as the King of Israel and the twelve tribes acknowledge his authority over them.
- Psalms 50:5 speaks of Yahweh's covenant being "sealed" by sacrifice: *Gather to me my faithful who sealed my covenant by sacrifice, the heavens proclaim his saving justice, God himself is judge.*
- In the reign of Judahite King Asa (911-870 BC), the people pledged their renewed commitment to the covenant by sacrificing seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep and: *they pledged their oath to Yahweh in ringing tones, with shouts of joy, to the sound of trumpet and horn; all Judah rejoiced over the oath...* (2 Chr 15:10-18).

Handout 2: Exodus Lesson 12
PLAN OF THE TABERNACLE
WEST



100 cubits long by 50 cubits wide; entrance 20 cubits wide
(c. 150 ft. or 46 meters by c. 75 ft. or 23 meters)

Outside the Tent/Dwelling = profane and unclean

Three Part Division of the Sanctuary:

Tent of Meeting Outer Court = sacred and clean

- Bronze Altar of Sacrifice (3 high x 5 square)
- Bronze holy water basin for ritual purification

Holy Place = sacred and clean

- L = Golden Lamp-stand (menorah)
- T = Golden Table containing the Bread of the Presence (2c x 1c x 1.5c high)
- I = Golden Altar of Incense in front of the curtain separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies (1c square x 2c high)
- ___ = embroidered tapestry curtain separated the Outer Court from the Holy Place

Holy of Holies = most sacred and clean

- ___ = embroidered tapestry curtain separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies
- A.C. = gold covered Ark of the Covenant covered with the gold covered Mercy Seat, the footstool of God and meeting place of heavenly and earthly liturgy (2.5c x 1.5c x 1.5c high)