

Crafting the Priestly Garments (c. September 1446–March 1445 BC)

Exodus 39:1–31

Crafting the Priestly Garments

1 And of the blue, and purple, and scarlet, they made cloths of service, to do service in the holy *place*, and made the holy garments for Aaron; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod

2 And he made the ephod of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

3 And they did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut *it into* wires, to work *it* in the blue, and in the purple, and in the scarlet, and in the fine linen, *with* cunning work.

4 They made shoulder-pieces for it, to couple *it* together: by the two edges was it coupled together.

5 And the curious girdle of his ephod, that *was* upon it, *was* of the same, according to the work thereof; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen; as the LORD commanded Moses.

6 And they wrought onyx stones enclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel.

7 And he put them on the shoulders of the ephod, *that they should be* stones for a memorial to the children of Israel; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Crafting the Breastpiece

8 And he made the breastplate of cunning work, like the work of the ephod; of gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

9 It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span *was* the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, *being* doubled.

10 And they set in it four rows of stones: *the first row was* a sardius, a topaz, and a carbuncle: this *was* the first row.

11 And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond.

12 And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst.

13 And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: *they were* enclosed in ouches of gold in their enclosings.

14 And the stones *were* according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, every one with his name, according to the twelve tribes.

15 And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, of wreathen work of pure gold.

16 And they made two ouches of gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate.

17 And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate.

18 And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, before it.

19 And they made two rings of gold, and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, upon the border of it, which *was* on the side of the ephod inward.

20 And they made two *other* golden rings, and put them on the two sides of the ephod underneath, toward the forepart of it, over against the *other* coupling thereof, above the curious girdle of the ephod.

21 And they did bind the breastplate by his rings unto the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it might be above the curious girdle of the ephod, and that the breastplate might not be loosed from the ephod; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod's Robe

22 And he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue.

23 And *there was* an hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of an habergeon, *with* a band round about the hole, that it should not rend.

24 And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates of blue, and purple, and scarlet, *and* twined linen.

25 And they made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates upon the hem of the robe, round about between the pomegranates;

26 A bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, round about the hem of the robe to minister *in*; as the LORD commanded Moses.

Crafting the Coat, Sash, Turban and Undergarments

27 And they made coats of fine linen of woven work for Aaron, and for his sons,

28 And a mitre of fine linen, and goodly bonnets of fine linen, and linen breeches of fine twined linen,

29 And a girdle of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, of needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses.

30 And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it a writing, *like to* the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31 And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten *it* on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Tabernacle is Completed (c. September 1446–March 1445 BC)

Exodus 39:32–40:15

Moses Inspects the Work and Blesses The People For Their Exacting Obedience

39:32 Thus was all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation finished: and the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so did they.

33 And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his hooks, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,

34 And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the veil of the covering,

35 The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat,

36 The table, *and* all the vessels thereof, and the showbread,

37 The pure candlestick, *with* the lamps thereof, *even with* the lamps to be set in order, and all the vessels thereof, and the oil for light,

38 And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door,

39 The brazen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,

40 The hangings of the court, his pillars, and his sockets, and the hanging for the court gate, his cords, and his pins, and all the vessels of the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of the congregation,

41 The cloths of service to do service in the holy *place*, and the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister in the priest's office.

42 According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work.

43 And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the LORD had commanded, even so had they done it: and Moses blessed them.

Yahweh Gives Instructions for Erecting the Tabernacle

40:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

3 And thou shalt put therein the ark of the testimony, and cover the ark with the veil.

4 And thou shalt bring in the table, and set in order the things that are to be set in order upon it; and thou shalt bring in the candlestick, and light the lamps thereof.

5 And thou shalt set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the testimony, and put the hanging of the door to the tabernacle.

6 And thou shalt set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation.

7 And thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and shalt put water therein.

8 And thou shalt set up the court round about, and hang up the hanging at the court gate.

9 And thou shalt take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle, and all that *is* therein, and shalt hallow it, and all the vessels thereof: and it shall be holy.

10 And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.

11 And thou shalt anoint the laver and his foot, and sanctify it.

12 And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and wash them with water.

13 And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, and anoint him, and sanctify him; that he may minister unto me in the priest's office.

14 And thou shalt bring his sons, and clothe them with coats:

15 And thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto me in the priest's office: for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations.

The Tabernacle is Erected (1 Nisan [March/April] 1445 BC)

Exodus 40:16–33

16 Thus did Moses: according to all that the LORD commanded him, so did he.

17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the LORD commanded Moses.

20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the LORD commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.

23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD; as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.
 25 And he lighted the lamps before the LORD; as the LORD commanded Moses.
 26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil:
 27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the LORD commanded Moses.
 28 And he set up the hanging *at* the door of the tabernacle.
 29 And he put the altar of burnt offering *by* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the LORD commanded Moses.
 30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash *withal*.
 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:
 32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the LORD commanded Moses.
 33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

Yahweh's Glory Fills the Tabernacle (1 Nisan [March/April] 1445 BC)

Exodus 40:34–35, 38	Numbers 9:15–16
<p>34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.</p> <p>38 For the cloud of the LORD <i>was</i> upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.</p>	<p>15 And on the day that the tabernacle was reared up the cloud covered the tabernacle, <i>namely</i>, the tent of the testimony:</p> <p>and at even there was upon the tabernacle as it were the appearance of fire, until the morning. 16 So it was always: the cloud covered it <i>by day</i>, and the appearance of fire by night.</p>

Scripture quotations are from The King James Version (KJV). The KJV is in the public domain.

Chronological Notes

1) Early Tabernacle Chronology.¹

- A) The tabernacle was erected on the first day of the first month of the second year (1 Nisan 1445 BC; Exod 40:1), and the cloud lifted from the tabernacle on the twentieth day of the second month of the second year (20 Iyyar 1445 BC; Num 10:11). Those 50 days marked the beginning of the era of tabernacle worship, and the events that took place during that time period are recorded in Exodus 40:16–38, Leviticus 1–27 and Numbers 1:1–10:10.
- B) Leviticus and Numbers record the events of this period in chronological order with the exception of Numbers 7–9 (these chapters record “other less important events that fell within that same period, and constitute a digression whose beginning and end are marked by the inclusion, *on the day when Moses had finished setting up the tabernacle*”; Num 7:1; 9:15). My chronology will follow the basic outline given by Wenham.² There is, of course, uncertainty as to the exact day on which certain portions of Leviticus were given by Yahweh to Moses and/or Aaron.

¹ The most thorough analysis of the temporal aspects of Leviticus that I have found is Andreas Ruwe’s “The Structure of the Book of Leviticus in the Narrative Outline of the Priestly Sinai Story (Exod 19:1–Num 10:10)” in *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception*, ed. Rolf Rendtorff & Robert A. Kugler, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 55–78. Ruwe argues that Leviticus is a narrative text and that the twenty-seven chapters of Leviticus form a narrative context (with all events “assigned to the first month of the second year”). Ruwe insists that Leviticus is not an independent narrative, but is part of the priestly narrative context of the Sinai pericope, Exodus 19:1–Numbers 10:10.

² Gordon J. Wenham, “Numbers: An Introduction and Commentary,” *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries* (Inter-Varsity Press, 2008), 104. Wenham’s outline is also followed by R. Dennis Cole, “Numbers,” *The New American Commentary* (Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 136 and Ronald B. Allen, “Numbers,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary Vol. 2* (Zondervan, 1990), 756–757.

- (1) Day 1 (1 Nisan [March/April] 1445).
 - (a) The erection of the tabernacle (Exod 40).
 - (b) Yahweh explains the sacrificial system (Lev 1–7).
 - (c) Ordination of Aaron and his sons (Lev 8).
 - (d) The first tabernacle offering is given by the tribe of Judah (Num 7:1–17).
- (2) Days 2–7 (2–7 Nisan [March/April] 1445).
 - (a) Tabernacle offerings are given by the tribes of Issachar, Zebulun, Reuben, Simeon, Gad and Ephraim (Num 7:18–53).
- (3) Day 8 (8 Nisan [April] 1445).
 - (a) Yahweh confirms the ministry of the Aaronic priesthood (Lev 9).
 - (b) Nadab and Abihu are killed by Yahweh (Lev 10).
 - (c) A tabernacle offering is given by the tribe of Manasseh (Num 7:54–59).
- (4) Days 8–11 (8–11 Nisan [April] 1445).
 - (a) The Laws of Purity (Lev 11–15).³
 - (b) The Day of Atonement (Lev 16).
 - (c) The Laws of Holiness (Lev 17–27).
 - (d) Tabernacle offerings are given by the tribes of Benjamin, Dan and Asher (Num 7:60–77).
- (5) Day 12 (12 Nisan [April] 1445).
 - (a) The last tabernacle offering is given by the tribe of Naphtali (Num 7:78–83).
 - (b) All offerings are inventoried and accounted for (Num 7:84–89).
 - (c) Clarification on the use of the lamps (Num 8:1–4).⁴
 - (d) The Levites are appointed for service (Num 8:5–26).
- (6) Day 14 (14 Nisan [April] 1445).
 - (a) The second Passover is celebrated (Num 9:1–14).
- (7) Day 31 - c. Day 48 (1 - c. 18 Iyyar [April/May] 1445).
 - (a) The first census is taken (Num 1–6).
- (8) c. Day 48 (18 Iyyar [May] 1445).
 - (a) Preparation for the departure from Sinai (Num 10:1–10).
- (9) Day 50 (20 Iyyar [May] 1445).
 - (a) The cloud lifts from the tabernacle and Israel begins the journey to Canaan (Num 10:11).

³ My assumption that the events of Leviticus are recorded in chronological order, and the close connection between Leviticus 10:10 and Leviticus 11:2, has led me to place Leviticus 11–15 after the deaths of Nadab and Abihu. At the least, Leviticus 16:1–2 confirms that the events of Leviticus 16–27 took place after this unnecessary tragedy.

⁴ It is difficult to know where to place Numbers 8 chronologically (it does not have a temporal marker as in Num 7:1 and 9:1). The context implies that the events in the chapter took place on or after the last day of the tabernacle offerings (cf. Num 7:78–89). The earliest 8:1–4 could have occurred is the “eighth day” (Aaron was not able to enter the tabernacle until that time; cf. Lev 9:23). As far as 8:5–26 is concerned, the question is—were the Levites dedicated before or after the census of Numbers 3:5–10? For now, I have left it in the reading after 8:1–4, but I’m open to being convinced to place it after Numbers 3.