

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

Exodus 39:1–31

Crafting the Priestly Garments

1 And from the blue and the purple and the crimson *yarns* they made woven garments for serving in the sanctuary, and they made the holy garments that were for Aaron, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod

2 And he made the ephod *of* gold, blue, and purple and crimson *yarns*, and finely twisted linen.

3 And he hammered out the leaves of gold, and he cut off cords to weave in the midst of the blue and in the midst of the purple and in the midst of the crimson and in the midst of the linen—*the* work of a skilled craftsman.

4 They made joined shoulder pieces for it; it was joined on its two edges.

5 And the waistband of his ephod, which was of one piece with it, *was of* like work, gold, blue, and purple and crimson *yarns*, and finely twisted linen, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

6 And they made onyx stones mounted *in* gold filigree settings, engraved *with* seal engravings according to the names of the Israelites.

7 And he set them on the ephod's shoulder pieces *as* stones of remembrance for the Israelites, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Breastpiece

8 And he made the breast piece, *the* work of a skilled craftsman, like *the* work of *the* ephod, *of* gold, blue, and purple and crimson *yarns*, and finely twisted linen.

9 It was squared; they made the breast piece doubled; its length *was* a span, and its width *was* a span *when* doubled.

10 And they filled it *with* four rows of stone; a row of carnelian, topaz, and emerald *was* the first row;

11 and the second row *was* a malachite, a sapphire, and a moonstone;

12 and the third row *was* a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst;

13 and the fourth row *was* a turquoise, an onyx, and a jasper. *They were* set *with* gold filigree settings in their mountings.

14 And the stones *were* according to the names of the Israelites; they *were* twelve according to their names, *with* seal engravings, each according to its name for *the* twelve tribes.

15 And they made on the breast piece braided chains, a work of pure gold ornamental cord.

16 And they made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and they put the two rings on the two edges of the breast piece.

17 And they put the two gold ornamental cords on the two rings on the edges of the breast piece.

18 And they put the two ends of the two ornamental cords on the two filigree settings, and they put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it.

19 And they made two gold rings, and they placed *them* on the two edges of the breast piece, on its lip that *is* on the other side of the ephod, to the inside.

20 And they made two gold rings and put them on the ephod's two shoulder pieces below, at its front near its seam above the waistband of the ephod.

21 And they tied the breast piece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord *so that* the breast piece *would* be on the waistband of the ephod and not come loose from the ephod, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod's Robe

22 And he made the robe of the ephod, weaver's work, totally of blue *yarn*.

23 And the opening of the robe in the middle of it was like the opening of a sturdy garment, *with* an edge for its opening all around so that it would not be torn.

24 And they made on the hem of the robe pomegranates of finely twisted blue and purple and crimson.

25 And they made pure gold bells and put the bells in the midst of the pomegranates on the hem of the robe all around in the midst of the pomegranates,

26 a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate on the hem of the robe all around for serving, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Coat, Sash, Turban and Undergarments

27 And they made the tunics of fine linen, a weaver's work, for Aaron and for his sons,

28 and the turban of fine linen and the headdresses of the headbands of fine linen and undergarments of the linen cloth, finely twisted,

29 and the sash of finely twisted linen and blue and purple and crimson *yarns*, the work of an embroiderer, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

30 And they made the rosette of the holy diadem *of* pure gold, and they wrote on it *with the* writing of seal engravings: "A holy object for Yahweh."

31 And they put a blue cord on it to put it above on the turban, as Yahweh had 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 And all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of assembly was finished, and the Israelites had done according to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses; so they did.

33 And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its equipment, its hooks, its frames, its bars, and its pillars and its bases;

34 and the covering of the red-dyed ram skins and the covering of fine leather and the curtain of the screen;

35 the ark of the testimony and its poles and the atonement cover;

36 the table, all its equipment, and the bread of the presence;

37 the pure *gold* lampstand, its lamps—the lamps of the row—and all its equipment and the oil of the light;

38 the gold altar, the anointing oil, the fragrant incense, and the screen of the entrance of the tent;

39 the bronze altar, and the bronze grating that *is* for it, its poles, and all its equipment, the basin and its stand,

40 the hangings of the courtyard, its pillars, and its bases; and the screen for the courtyard gate, its tent cords and its pegs; and all the equipment of the service of the tabernacle for the tent of assembly,

41 the woven garments for serving in the sanctuary—the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons to serve as priests.

42 According to all that Yahweh had commanded Moses, so the Israelites did all the work.

43 And Moses saw all the work, and, indeed, they had done it as Yahweh had commanded; so they did, and Moses blessed them.

Yahweh Gives Instructions for Erecting the Tabernacle

40:1 And Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying,

2 “On the first day of the month, you will set up the tabernacle of the tent of assembly.

3 And you will put there the ark of the testimony, and you will cover over the ark *with* the curtain.

4 And you will bring the table, and you will arrange its setting, and you will bring the lampstand, and you will set up its lamps.

5 And you will put the gold altar for incense before the ark of the testimony, and you will set up the entrance screen for the tabernacle.

6 And you will put the altar of the burnt offering before the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of assembly.

7 And you will put the basin between the tent of assembly and the altar, and you will put water in it.

8 And you will set up the courtyard all around, and you will put up the screen of the gate of the courtyard.

9 “And you will take the anointing oil, and you will anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it, and you will consecrate all of its equipment, and it will be holy.

10 And you will anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all of its equipment, and you will consecrate the altar, and the altar will be a most holy thing.

11 And you will anoint the basin and its stand, and you will consecrate it.

12 And you will bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of assembly, and you will wash them with the water.

13 And you will clothe Aaron with the holy garments, and you will anoint him, and you will consecrate him, and he will serve as a priest for me.

14 And you will bring his sons, and you will clothe them *with* tunics.

15 And you will anoint them as you anointed their father, and they will serve as priests for me. And their anointing will be for them to be a lasting priesthood throughout their generations.”

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

Exodus 40:1–33

16 And Moses did according to all that Yahweh had commanded him; so he did.

17 In the first month of the second year, on *the* first of the month, the tabernacle was set up.

18 And Moses raised the tabernacle, and he placed its bases, and he set up its frames, and he placed its bars, and he raised its pillars.

19 And he spread the tent over the tabernacle; he placed the covering of the tent over it, above *it*, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

20 And he took and he put the testimony into the ark, and he placed the poles on the ark, and he put the atonement cover on the ark, above *it*.

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and he set up the curtain of the screening, and he shielded the ark of the testimony, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of assembly on the north side of the tabernacle outside the curtain.

23 And he arranged on it an arrangement of bread before Yahweh, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.

24 And he placed the lampstand in the tent of assembly opposite the table on the south side of the tabernacle.
 25 And he set up the lamps before Yahweh, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.
 26 And he placed the gold altar in the tent of assembly before the curtain.
 27 And he turned fragrant incense into smoke on it, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.
 28 And he set up the entrance screen for the tabernacle.
 29 And the altar of burnt offering he placed *at* the entrance of the tabernacle of the tent of assembly, and he offered on it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.
 30 And he placed the basin between the tent of assembly and the altar, and he put there water for washing.
 31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet from it.
 32 At their going into the tent of assembly and at their approaching the altar, they washed, as Yahweh had commanded Moses.
 33 And he set up the courtyard all around the tabernacle and the altar, and he put up the screen of the gate of the courtyard, and Moses completed 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 And the cloud covered the tent of assembly, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was unable to go into the tent of assembly because the cloud settled on it and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.</p> <p>38 For the cloud of Yahweh <i>was</i> on the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it <i>by</i> night before the eyes of all the house of Israel throughout all their journeys.</p>	<p>15 And on a day setting up the tabernacle, the cloud covered the tent of the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony;</p> <p>in the evening it was on the tabernacle as an appearance of fire until morning.</p> <p>16 So it was continually; the cloud would cover it and the appearance of fire <i>by</i> night.</p>

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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.