

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

Exodus 39:1–31

Crafting the Priestly Garments

1 Moreover, from the blue and purple and scarlet *material*, they made finely woven garments for ministering in the holy place as well as the holy garments which were for Aaron, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod

2 He made the ephod of gold, *and* of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen.

3 Then they hammered out gold sheets and cut *them* into threads to be woven in *with* the blue and the purple and the scarlet *material*, and the fine linen, the work of a skillful workman.

4 They made attaching shoulder pieces for the ephod; it was attached at its two *upper* ends.

5 The skillfully woven band which was on it was like its workmanship, of the same material: of gold *and* of blue and purple and scarlet *material*, and fine twisted linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 They made the onyx stones, set in gold filigree *settings*; they were engraved *like* the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel.

7 And he placed them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod, *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Breastpiece

8 He made the breastpiece, the work of a skillful workman, like the workmanship of the ephod: of gold *and* of blue and purple and scarlet *material* and fine twisted linen.

9 It was square; they made the breastpiece folded double, a span long and a span wide when folded double.

10 And they mounted four rows of stones on it. The first row *was* a row of ruby, topaz, and emerald;

11 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire and a diamond;

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

13 and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were set in gold filigree *settings* when they were mounted.

14 The stones were corresponding to the names of the sons of Israel; they were twelve, corresponding to their names, *engraved with* the engravings of a signet, each with its name for the twelve tribes.

15 They made on the breastpiece chains like cords, of twisted cordage work in pure gold.

16 They made two gold filigree *settings* and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastpiece.

17 Then they put the two gold cords in the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece.

18 They put the *other* two ends of the two cords on the two filigree *settings*, and put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it.

19 They made two gold rings and placed *them* on the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inner edge which was next to the ephod.

20 Furthermore, they made two gold rings and placed them on the bottom of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, on the front of it, close to the place where it joined, above the woven band of the ephod.

21 They bound the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it would be on the woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece would not come loose from the ephod, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Ephod's Robe

22 Then he made the robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue;

23 and the opening of the robe was *at the top* in the center, as the opening of a coat of mail, with a binding all around its opening, so that it would not be torn.

24 They made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet *material and* twisted *linen* on the hem of the robe.

25 They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around on the hem of the robe,

26 alternating a bell and a pomegranate all around on the hem of the robe for the service, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Crafting the Coat, Sash, Turban and Undergarments

27 They made the tunics of finely woven linen for Aaron and his sons,

28 and the turban of fine linen, and the decorated caps of fine linen, and the linen breeches of fine twisted linen,

29 and the sash of fine twisted linen, and blue and purple and scarlet *material*, the work of the weaver, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and inscribed it like the engravings of a signet, "Holy to the LORD."

31 They fastened a blue cord to it, to fasten it on the turban above, just as the LORD 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 Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was completed; and the sons of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did.

33 They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, and its pillars and its sockets;

34 and the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of porpoise skins, and the screening veil;

35 the ark of the testimony and its poles and the mercy seat;

36 the table, all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence;

37 the pure *gold* lampstand, with its arrangement of lamps and all its utensils, and the oil for the light;

38 and the gold altar, and the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the veil for the doorway of the tent;

39 the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils, the laver and its stand;

40 the hangings for the court, its pillars and its sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords and its pegs and all the equipment for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting;

41 the woven garments for ministering in the holy place and the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.

42 So the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

43 And Moses examined all the work and behold, they had done it; just as the LORD had commanded, this they had done. So Moses blessed them.

Yahweh Gives Instructions for Erecting the Tabernacle

40:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

2 "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

3 "You shall place the ark of the testimony there, and you shall screen the ark with the veil.

4 "You shall bring in the table and arrange what belongs on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and mount its lamps.

5 "Moreover, you shall set the gold altar of incense before the ark of the testimony, and set up the veil for the doorway to the tabernacle.

6 "You shall set the altar of burnt offering in front of the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting.

7 "You shall set the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it.

8 "You shall set up the court all around and hang up the veil for the gateway of the court.

9 "Then you shall take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and shall consecrate it and all its furnishings; and it shall be holy.

10 "You shall anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar, and the altar shall be most holy.

11 "You shall anoint the laver and its stand, and consecrate it.

12 "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the doorway of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

13 "You shall put the holy garments on Aaron and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister as a priest to Me.

14 "You shall bring his sons and put tunics on them;

15 and you shall anoint them even as you have anointed their father, that they may minister as priests to Me; and their anointing will qualify them for a perpetual priesthood throughout their generations."

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

Exodus 40:16–33

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

17 Now in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, the tabernacle was erected.

18 Moses erected the tabernacle and laid its sockets, and set up its boards, and inserted its bars and erected its pillars.

19 He spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

20 Then he took the testimony and put *it* into the ark, and attached the poles to the ark, and put the mercy seat on top of the ark.

21 He brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up a veil for the screen, and screened off the ark of the testimony, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 Then he put the table in the tent of meeting on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil.

23 He set the arrangement of bread in order on it before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

24 Then he placed the lampstand in the tent of meeting, opposite the table, on the south side of the tabernacle.

25 He lighted the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

26 Then he placed the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the veil;

27 and he burned fragrant incense on it, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

28 Then he set up the veil for the doorway of the tabernacle.

29 He set the altar of burnt offering *before* the doorway of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
 30 He placed the laver between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing.
 31 From it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet.
 32 When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.
 33 He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus 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 the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.</p> <p>38 For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.</p>	<p>15 Now on the day that the tabernacle was erected the cloud covered the tabernacle, the tent of the testimony, and in the evening it was like the appearance of fire over the tabernacle, until morning. 16 So it was continuously; the cloud would cover it <i>by day</i>, and the appearance of fire by 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.