

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

Exodus 39:1–31

**Crafting the Priestly Garments**

1 From the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn they made woven garments for serving in the sanctuary; they made holy garments that were for Aaron, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**Crafting the Ephod**

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

3 They hammered the gold into thin sheets and cut it into narrow strips to weave them into the blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and into the fine linen, the work of an artistic designer.

4 They made shoulder pieces for it, attached to two of its corners, so it could be joined together.

5 The artistically woven waistband of the ephod that was on it was like it, of one piece with it, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and fine twisted linen, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 They set the onyx stones in gold filigree settings, engraved as with the engravings of a seal with the names of the sons of Israel.

7 He put them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as stones of memorial for the Israelites, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**Crafting the Breastpiece**

8 He made the breastpiece, the work of an artistic designer, in the same fashion as the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twisted linen.

9 It was square—they made the breastpiece doubled, nine inches long and nine inches wide when doubled.

10 They set on it four rows of stones: a row with a ruby, a topaz, and a beryl—the first row;

11 and the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald;

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

13 and the fourth row, a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in gold filigree settings.

14 The stones were for the names of the sons of Israel, twelve, corresponding to the number of their names. Each name corresponding to one of the twelve tribes was like the engravings of a seal.

15 They made for the breastpiece braided chains like cords of pure gold,

16 and they made two gold filigree settings and two gold rings, and they attached the two rings to the upper two ends of the breastpiece.

17 They attached the two gold chains to the two rings at the ends of the breastpiece;

18 the other two ends of the two chains they attached to the two settings, and they attached them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front of it.

19 They made two rings of gold and put them on the other two ends of the breastpiece on its edge, which is on the inner side of the ephod.

20 They made two more gold rings and attached them to the bottom of the two shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the juncture above the waistband of the ephod.

21 They tied the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod by blue cord, so that it was above the waistband of the ephod, so that the breastpiece would not be loose from the ephod, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**Crafting the Ephod's Robe**

22 He made the robe of the ephod completely blue, the work of a weaver.

23 There was an opening in the center of the robe, like the opening of a collar, with an edge all around the opening so that it could not be torn.

24 They made pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and twisted linen around the hem of the robe.

25 They made bells of pure gold and attached the bells between the pomegranates around the hem of the robe between the pomegranates.

26 There was a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe, to be used in ministering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

**Crafting the Coat, Sash, Turban and Undergarments**

27 They made tunics of fine linen—the work of a weaver, for Aaron and for his sons—

28 and the turban of fine linen, the headbands of fine linen, and the undergarments of fine twisted linen.

29 The sash was of fine twisted linen and blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, the work of an embroiderer, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 They made a plate, the holy diadem, of pure gold and wrote on it an inscription, as on the engravings of a seal, "Holiness to the LORD."

31 They attached to it a blue cord, to attach it to 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 So all the work of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed, and the Israelites did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses—they did it exactly so.

33 They brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings, clasps, frames, bars, posts, and bases;

34 and the coverings of ram skins dyed red, the covering of fine leather, and the protecting curtain;

35 the ark of the testimony and its poles, and the atonement lid;

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

37 the pure lampstand, its lamps, with the lamps set in order, and all its accessories, and oil for the light;

38 and the gold altar, and the anointing oil, and the fragrant incense; and the curtain for the entrance to the tent;

39 the bronze altar and its bronze grating, its poles, and all its utensils; the large basin with its pedestal;

40 the hangings of the courtyard, its posts and its bases, and the curtain for the gateway of the courtyard, its ropes and its tent pegs, and all the furnishings for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting;

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

42 The Israelites did all the work according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

43 Moses inspected all the work—and they had done it just as the LORD had commanded—they had done it exactly—and Moses blessed them.

### Yahweh Gives Instructions for Erecting the Tabernacle

40:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses:

2 “On the first day of the first month you are to set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.

3 You are to place the ark of the testimony in it and shield the ark with the special curtain.

4 You are to bring in the table and set out the things that belong on it; then you are to bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps.

5 You are to put the gold altar for incense in front of the ark of the testimony and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

6 You are to put the altar for the burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting.

7 You are to put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it.

8 You are to set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard.

9 And take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that is in it, and sanctify it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy.

10 Then you are to anoint the altar for the burnt offering with all its utensils; you are to sanctify the altar, and it will be the most holy altar.

11 You must also anoint the large basin and its pedestal, and you are to sanctify it.

12 “You are to bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the tent of meeting and wash them with water.

13 Then you are to clothe Aaron with the holy garments and anoint him and sanctify him so that he may minister as my priest.

14 You are to bring his sons and clothe them with tunics

15 and anoint them just as you anointed their father, so that they may minister as my priests; their anointing will make them a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations.”

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

Exodus 40:16–33

16 This is what Moses did, according to all the LORD had commanded him—so he did.

17 So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month, in the second year.

18 When Moses set up the tabernacle and put its bases in place, he set up its frames, attached its bars, and set up its posts.

19 Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent over it, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

20 He took the testimony and put it in the ark, attached the poles to the ark, and then put the atonement lid on the ark.

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung the protecting curtain, and shielded the ark of the testimony from view, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

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

23 And he set the bread in order on it before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

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

25 Then he set up the lamps before the LORD, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

26 And he put the gold altar in the tent of meeting in front of the curtain,

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

28 Then he put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

29 He also put the altar for the burnt offering by the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, and offered on it the burnt offering and the meal offering, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 Then he put the large basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it for washing.  
 31 Moses and Aaron and his sons would wash their hands and their feet from it.  
 32 Whenever they entered the tent of meeting, and whenever they approached the altar, they would wash, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.  
 33 And he set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and the altar, and put the curtain at the gate of the courtyard. 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 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 settled on it and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.</p> <p>38 For the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, but fire would be on it at night, in plain view of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.</p>	<p>15 On the day that the tabernacle was set up, the cloud covered the tabernacle—the tent of the testimony—</p> <p>and from evening until morning there was a fiery appearance over the tabernacle.</p> <p>16 This is the way it used to be continually: The cloud would cover it by day, and there was a fiery appearance by night.</p>

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### **Chronological Notes**

#### 1) Early Tabernacle Chronology.<sup>1</sup>

- 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.<sup>2</sup> 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) 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).

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

- (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).<sup>3</sup>  
 (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).<sup>4</sup>  
 (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).

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<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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.