

## Exodus Chapter 39

Verses 1-31

Seven times this passage states that “Bezalel” (38:22), and his helpers fashioned the priestly garments “as the LORD had commanded Moses.”

Besides the detail in these descriptions, phrases such as “artistically” or “intricately woven” reinforce the immense care that they took.

The workers sewed “gold threads” into the fabric of the ephod, evidence of the garments’ beauty and costliness.

Nothing is too good for the Lord (Rom. 12:1-2).

“They made ... He made.

The third-person plural, “they,” dominating the manufacturing report (verses 2-31), is interrupted 4 times by the singular “he” (verses 2, 7, 8, 22).

The plural undoubtedly refers to Bezalel and/or his associates in operation, whereas the singular marks out what Bezalel worked on by himself.

**Exodus 39:1 "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."**

“As the LORD commanded Moses”:

This repetitive refrain (verses 1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31), a quality-control statement, signals to the reader of every age, or to the listener in Israel back then, that God’s detailed instructions to Moses on the fabricating of the ephod (verses 2-7), breastplate (verses 8-21), and priestly garments (verses 22-31) were followed to the letter.

Obedience in every detail was taken seriously by Israel’s artisans.

This and the rest of this Chapter are the details about the priest's garments.

We dealt with this (in chapter 28), of Exodus, so we will not go into very much detail here.

**Exodus 39:2 "And he made the ephod [of] gold, blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen."**

“He made the ephod”:

See note on 28:5-13.

**Exodus 39:3 "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."**

"They did beat the gold into thin plates, and cut it into wires":

The process adopted to get the delicate strips for braided chains or gold embroidery work conformed well with contemporary Egyptian methods of gold-working.

We will just touch again on a few small points of interest.

The gold was hammered and cut very fine like thread and woven into this beautiful dyed linen.

The gold would give it brilliance.

This ephod was like a great big vest that the high priest wore.

This was a very colorful, strikingly beautiful garment.

**Exodus 39:4 "They made shoulderpieces for it, to couple [it] together: by the two edges was it coupled together."**

From here to the end of verse thirty-one, we have a very particular account of the making of the priest's garments exactly according to the directions given to Moses (see notes on Exodus 28:1 to end of chapter twenty eight).

See Exodus 28:7.

**Exodus 39:5 "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."**

See Exodus 28:8.

We spoke of this curious girdle before as being a side self-belt that kind of molded the garment into the high priest, as if to make the garment and high priest one.

**Exodus 39:6 "And they wrought onyx stones enclosed in ouches of gold, graven, as signets are graven, with the names of the children of Israel."**

See Exodus 28:9-11.

**Exodus 39:7 "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."**

See Exodus 28:12.

We see here, two pieces of gold with onyx stones mounted in them.

One was worn on each shoulder of the high priest.

The names of 6 tribes of Israel were engraved in each of the two onyx stones; thus, the high priest had all the 12 tribes of Israel on his shoulders.

**Exodus 39:8 "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."**

“He made the breastplate”:

See notes on 28:15-30.

The Urim and Thummim were inserted into the breastplate and became an essential part of it, or were seen as a permanent connection with it.

See Exodus 28:15.

**Exodus 39:9 "It was foursquare; they made the breastplate double: a span [was] the length thereof, and a span the breadth thereof, [being] doubled."**

See Exodus 28:16.

**Exodus 39:10 "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."**

See Exodus 28:17.

**Exodus 39:11 "And the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond."**

See Exodus 28:18.

**Exodus 39:12 "And the third row, a ligure, an agate, and an amethyst."**

See Exodus 28:19.

**Exodus 39:13 "And the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper: [they were] enclosed in ouches of gold in their enclosings."**

See Exodus 28:20.

This breastplate was 3 palms wide (span), and 3 palms long.

It was doubled making a pocket in the middle.

On the front, there were 12 pieces of gold attached to the vest in 4 rows of 3 each.

Set in the gold were 12 precious stones, one for each tribe of Israel.

Not only did the high priest have the people on his shoulders, but on his heart as well.

**Exodus 39:14 "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."**

See Exodus 28:21.

**Exodus 39:15 "And they made upon the breastplate chains at the ends, [of] wreathen work [of] pure gold."**

See Exodus 28:22.

**Exodus 39:16 "And they made two ouches [of] gold, and two gold rings; and put the two rings in the two ends of the breastplate."**

See Exodus 28:23.

**Exodus 39:17 "And they put the two wreathen chains of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate."**

See Exodus 28:24.

**Exodus 39:18 "And the two ends of the two wreathen chains they fastened in the two ouches, and put them on the shoulderpieces of the ephod, before it."**

See Exodus 28:25.

**Exodus 39:19 "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."**

See Exodus 28:26.

**Exodus 39:20 "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."**

See Exodus 28:27.

**Exodus 39:21 "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."**

See Exodus 28:28.

This was just telling how this breastplate was connected to the ephod by these chains.

The chains being attached to hooks behind the breastplate kept the hooks from distracting from the beauty.

**Exodus 39:22 "And he made the robe of the ephod [of] woven work, all [of] blue."**

“He made the robe of the ephod”:

See note on 28:31-35.

See Exodus 28:31.

**Exodus 39:23 "And [there was] a hole in the midst of the robe, as the hole of a habergeon, [with] a band round about the hole, that it should not rend."**

See Exodus 28:32.

**Exodus 39:24 "And they made upon the hems of the robe pomegranates [of] blue, and purple, and scarlet, [and] twined [linen]."**

See Exodus 28:33.

**Exodus 39:25 "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;"**

See Exodus 28:33.

**Exodus 39:26 "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."**

See Exodus 28:34.

We see here a beautiful robe for the high priest to minister in. At the bottom, there were alternated pomegranates and gold bells. The rest of it was just explaining how it was made.

**Exodus 39:27 "And they made coats [of] fine linen [of] woven work for Aaron, and for his sons,"**

“They made coats ... for Aaron and for his sons”:

See notes on 28:39-43.

**Exodus 39:28 "And a mitre [of] fine linen, and goodly bonnets [of] fine linen, and linen breeches [of] fine twined linen,"**

See Exodus 28:39.

**Exodus 39:29 "And a girdle [of] fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, [of] needlework; as the LORD commanded Moses."**

See Exodus 28:39.

We see here more garments that were made for the high priest and the priests.

Notice that even the priest had linen.

Remember linen is symbolic of righteousness.

The priests symbolize the Christians.

We know by this that we must put on the righteousness of Christ.

These breeches were for modesty.

We have covered all of this in an earlier lesson.

**Exodus 39:30 "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."**

"They made the plate of the holy crown":

See note on 28:36-38, on this special plate engraved with its message of God's purity and separation from all the profane and impure.

**Exodus 39:31 "And they tied unto it a lace of blue, to fasten [it] on high upon the mitre; as the LORD commanded Moses."**

See Exodus 28:37.

This is describing the beautiful headpiece of the high priest who proclaimed with this headpiece HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

By it being on his forehead, it showed that it was on his mind continuously.

**Exodus 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."**

“Thus was all the work ... did according”:

Finally the moment arrived when all the different tasks assigned to different craftsmen were all completed.

And the great task on which they embarked was ready for formal presentation to Israel’s leader.

“And the children of Israel”:

No individual artisan is singled out for special mention or award.

Instead the whole nation was represented as doing everything in accordance with the LORD’s instructions to Moses.

“So did they”:

In what is almost an offhanded aside, emphasis is placed on the strict attention paid to the official, divine specifications for all parts of the work for the tabernacle.

This was a very strong statement.

Not only did it make the statement that all of the work was done, but it said that it was done exactly as the plans were given to Moses by the LORD.

No changes were made at all.

**Exodus 39:33 "And they brought the tabernacle unto Moses, the tent, and all his furniture, his taches, his boards, his bars, and his pillars, and his sockets,"**

“They brought the tabernacle unto Moses”:

Attestations of obedience and accuracy provide, as it were, an envelope (verses 32, 42-43), for the concise inventory of all the parts included in that presentation to Moses.

None of the individual parts listed, nor the sum of them, reflect just human ingenuity in designing something they wanted to have, but reflect instead just what their LORD required them to have.

It was fully His architecture and His design at every level of the undertaking.

**Exodus 39:34 "And the covering of rams' skins dyed red, and the covering of badgers' skins, and the veil of the covering,"**

See notes on Exodus 25:5.

**Exodus 39:35 "The ark of the testimony, and the staves thereof, and the mercy seat,"**

See notes on Exodus 25:16.

**Exodus 39:36 "The table, [and] all the vessels thereof, and the showbread,"**

See notes on Exodus 25:30.

**Exodus 39:37 "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,"**

And "The pure candlestick" with all his furniture.

Called "pure", because made of pure gold, and was to be kept pure and clean by the priests.

And in which pure oil olive was burnt, and gave a clear light.

Its furniture were its lamps, tongs, and snuff dishes (Exodus 25:31).

**Exodus 39:38 "And the golden altar, and the anointing oil, and the sweet incense, and the hanging for the tabernacle door,"**

"The golden altar":

I.e., the altar of incense (see Exodus 30:3).

**Exodus 39:39 "The brasen altar, and his grate of brass, his staves, and all his vessels, the laver and his foot,"**

See notes on Exodus 27:2.

**Exodus 39:40 "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,"**

See notes on Exodus 27:19.

**Exodus 39:41 "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."**

See notes on Exodus 31:10.

The double repetition of the same quality-control refrain found earlier in the chapter together with the 2 additional phrases emphasizing exact conformity (note "behold" and "just as"), to all



specifications combine to formally mark the closing of these great God-initiated preparations for the place of His presence and the site of their worship.

Israel's skillful craftsmen had done their work with zero tolerance for error in mind!

**Exodus 39:42 "According to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all the work."**

See notes on Exodus 7:6; 16:34.

We see here again, a list of each item that was made.

Moses had received the plans from God.

God had called Bezaleel and Aholiab to do the actual oversight of the work.

And now that this was finished, it had to be brought to Moses to examine each item to make sure that each detail had been carried out to the fullest.

**Exodus 39:43 "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."**

"Moses did look upon all the work":

Fittingly enough, the one who had been with God on the mount and had passed on to the people the blueprints for everything connected with the LORD's tabernacle personally inspected the work and confirmed its successful completion.

The term "work" is to be taken as "the end result" of professional and skilled craftsmen.

"And Moses blessed them":

By this act, Moses set his final and formal seal of approval on the outcome of their earnestness and diligence, and expressed his prayer-wish that good would result to them from their God.

This is the only instance recorded in Exodus of Moses' pronouncing a blessing upon his people.

The other appearances of the verb "to bless" occur 3 times with God as the subject of the verb (20:11, 24; 23:25).

And one time with Pharaoh requesting Moses to bless him (12:32).

All of this work pleased Moses, because he saw that Aholiab and Bezaleel had done their job well.

Now Moses spoke a blessing on all the workers.

This blessing was actually a blessing from God, but Moses was God's agent and the blessing spoken by Moses came from God.

This blessing was for this world, but Moses, these workers, Bezaleel and Aholiab would have great reward in heaven as well.

### **Exodus Chapter 39 Questions**

1. What was the ephod made of?
2. What type of thread was it sewn with?
3. What was the ephod like?
4. How was it coupled together?
5. What was the curious girdle?
6. What was the onyx stones mounted in?
7. What was graven upon them?
8. Where were they worn?
9. What was the symbolic meaning of these two shoulder onyxes?
10. What was the breastplate made of?
11. How many stones were on the front of it?
12. What did they symbolize?
13. What was the shape of the breastplate?
14. What did this breastplate full of stones symbolize?
15. How was it attached to the garment?
16. What was around the hem of the robe?
17. What were Aaron's sons' coats made of?
18. What was the mitre?
19. What do the priests symbolize?
20. What was written upon the plate on the crown?

21. What did they do with all the items when they finished them?
22. How did Moses judge the work?
23. Where had the plans originally come from?
24. Who were the two overseers of the work?
25. What did Moses do for the workers?