

Exodus Chapter Thirty-Nine

Read **Exodus 39:1-7** – The Ephod

v.1-2 “OF THE BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread* THEY MADE GARMENTS OF MINISTRY, FOR MINISTERING IN THE HOLY *place*, AND MADE THE HOLY GARMENTS FOR AARON, AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES. HE MADE THE EPHOD OF GOLD, BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread*, AND OF FINE WOVEN LINEN.”

We find here that the garments for Aaron and the high priests that followed him wore garments that were made from the same fine linen and the same colors as the interior covering of the tabernacle. As we should remember from our study of chapter 28, they included the breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban and sash or girdle.

v.3 “AND THEY BEAT THE GOLD INTO THIN SHEETS AND CUT *it into* THREADS, TO WORK *it* IN *with* THE BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread*, AND THE FINE LINEN, *into* ARTISTIC DESIGNS.”

As is common in scripture, each time a particular event is described we are given additional information.

Exodus 28:5 “THEY SHALL TAKE THE GOLD, BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread*, AND THE FINE LINEN”

As we read chapter 28 we probably assumed that the gold thread used in the ephod was also linen but here we're told that it was pure gold, worked into sheets thin enough that it could be cut into thread and woven into cloth.

v.4 “THEY MADE SHOULDER STRAPS FOR IT TO COUPLE *it* TOGETHER; IT WAS COUPLED TOGETHER AT ITS TWO EDGES.”

Here we see that the front and back were coupled or sewn together with shoulder straps and that the sides were coupled or sewn together as well. This would give it the appearance of what we would call a vest today, however without the buttons down the front and would need to be donned by putting it over the head.

v.5 “AND THE INTRICATELY WOVEN BAND OF HIS EPHOD THAT *was* ON IT *was* OF THE SAME WORKMANSHIP, *woven of* GOLD, BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread*, AND OF FINE WOVEN LINEN, AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

The girdle or sash, called a band in the NKJV was made of the same material in the same colors. We also note that all of this was done “AS THE LORD HAD COMMANEDED MOSES.”

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v.6 “AND THEY SET ONYX STONES, ENCLOSED IN SETTINGS OF GOLD; THEY WERE ENGRAVED, AS SIGNETS ARE ENGRAVED, WITH THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL.”

We noted in our earlier study that the Hebrew word shoham that is translated onyx could be a sardine stone or even an emerald. These stones would be engraved with the names of the twelve sons of Israel, “IN ORDER OF THEIR BIRTH” and mounted on the shoulders of the ephod. They were anchored in settings of gold.

It is said that because of the stones with the names of the tribes mounted on the shoulders of his garment that the high priest bore the weight of the government of God’s people. This analogy is emphasized by the prophet in speaking of the Messiah to come:

Isaiah 9:6 “FOR UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN, UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN; AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE UPON HIS SHOULDER. AND HIS NAME WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL, COUNSELOR, MIGHTY GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE.”

We would also note that apparently God’s original purpose for Israel was to be ruled through the High Priest under the old law and that is in fact the organization of the church today. We serve a risen savior that is also High Priest (**Hebrews 6:20**) and King (II Peter 1:11).

v.7 “HE PUT THEM ON THE SHOULDERS OF THE EPHOD AS MEMORIAL STONES FOR THE SONS OF ISRAEL, AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

This was to be done as a memorial. The priests, any time that they came before God would be bearing the names of the sons of Israel and God would remember them. Again the notation is made that these things were done “AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES.

Read **Exodus 39:8-21** – The Breastplate

v.8 “AND HE MADE THE BREASTPLATE, ARTISTICALLY WOVEN LIKE THE WORKMANSHIP OF THE EPHOD, OF GOLD, BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET *thread*, AND OF FINE WOVEN LINEN.”

In **Exodus 28:15** this is called the “BREASTPLATE OF JUDGMENT”. As such it represented the office of the one who, as the representative of God, judged Israel. Just as Jesus Christ is both high priest of spiritual Israel today and with the authority to rule given him by God; the high priest was to judge Israel, acting as God’s representative while God ruled as king over his chosen people.

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v.9 “THEY MADE THE BREASTPLATE SQUARE BY DOUBLING IT; A SPAN **was** ITS LENGTH AND A SPAN ITS WIDTH WHEN DOUBLED.”

A span is the width of a normal size hand, open with the fingers spread. Since not all hands are the same size, secular sources show that it was somewhat standardized at 9.5 inches.

v.10-11 “AND THEY SET IN IT FOUR ROWS OF STONES: A ROW WITH A SARDIUS, A TOPAZ, AND AN EMERALD WAS THE FIRST ROW; THE SECOND ROW, A TURQUOISE, A SAPPHIRE, AND A DIAMOND;”

The breastplate carried four rows of precious stones, three in each row, representing the twelve tribes of Israel. The reference sources say that the sardius was probably either a sard or what we would call a red jasper stone, more likely a sard as a jasper stone is included in the last row.

v.12-13 “THE THIRD ROW, A JACINTH, AN AGATE, AND AN AMETHYST; THE FOURTH ROW, A BERYL, AN ONYX, AND A JASPER. **They were** ENCLOSED IN SETTINGS OF GOLD IN THEIR MOUNTINGS.”

The jacinth is a variety of zircon cut as a gemstone, usually red or cinnamon in color. The beryl stone most familiar to most of us is called an aquamarine, and this is also the most common color. The jasper is a variety of silica, cut and polished as a gemstone and can come in a variety of colors. It was very common as a gemstone in Hebrew world. All the stones were in gold settings.

v.14 “**There were** TWELVE STONES ACCORDING TO THE NAMES OF THE SONS OF ISRAEL: ACCORDING TO THEIR NAMES, **engraved like** A SIGNET, EACH ONE WITH ITS OWN NAME ACCORDING TO THE TWELVE TRIBES.”

Twelve stones, each engraved like a signet ring with the name of one of the tribes of Israel. Again signifying those whom the high priest represented to God and over whom he had God’s authority to judge.

v.15-16 “AND THEY MADE CHAINS FOR THE BREASTPLATE AT THE ENDS, LIKE BRAIDED CORDS OF PURE GOLD. THEY ALSO MADE TWO SETTINGS OF GOLD AND TWO GOLD RINGS, AND PUT THE TWO RINGS ON THE TWO ENDS OF THE BREASTPLATE.”

These two verses describe the means of attaching the breastplate to the ephod. First they made chains of pure gold. These chains were probably much like a chain we would use today as a necklace or to hold a pendant. Then they made settings in the upper corners of the breastplate with a gold ring in each setting.

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v.17-18 “AND THEY PUT THE TWO BRAIDED *chains* OF GOLD IN THE TWO RINGS ON THE ENDS OF THE BREASTPLATE. THE TWO ENDS OF THE TWO BRAIDED *chains* THEY FASTENED IN THE TWO SETTINGS, AND PUT THEM ON THE SHOULDER STRAPS OF THE EPHOD IN THE FRONT.”

The golden chains were run through the rings or loops on the breastplate and then fastened to the setting in the shoulder straps of the ephod. This allowed the breastplate to hang down on the chest of the high priest.

v.19 “AND THEY MADE TWO RINGS OF GOLD AND PUT *them* ON THE TWO ENDS OF THE BREASTPLATE, ON THE EDGE OF IT, WHICH *was* ON THE INWARD SIDE OF THE EPHOD.”

A similar arrangement was designed and implemented at the bottom of the breastplate. The rings were fastened to the underside of the breastplate on the inside of the two bottom corners.

v.20 “THEY MADE TWO *other* GOLD RINGS AND PUT THEM ON THE TWO SHOULDER STRAPS, UNDERNEATH THE EPHOD TOWARD ITS FRONT, RIGHT AT THE SEAM ABOVE THE INTRICATELY WOVEN BAND OF THE EPHOD.”

Then on the ephod the shoulder straps where apparently ran the full length of the garment and acted as reinforcements. Now two gold rings are being fastened on the ephod at the bottom of the breastplate and just above the girdle or sash that the NKJV calls a band.

v.21 “AND THEY BOUND THE BREASTPLATE BY MEANS OF ITS RINGS TO THE RINGS OF THE EPHOD WITH A BLUE CORD, SO THAT IT WOULD BE ABOVE THE INTRICATELY WOVEN BAND OF THE EPHOD, AND THAT THE BREASTPLATE WOULD NOT COME LOOSE FROM THE EPHOD, AS THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

The bottom of the breastplate was fastened by a blue cord rather than a gold chain as was used at the top. This kept the breastplate from interfering with the movement of the high priests as he carried out his duties. We also note that again we're reminded that they did as the Lord had commanded Moses. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just get more people to honor God in that way today.

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Read **Exodus 39:22-31** – The Priestly Garments

v.22-23 “HE MADE THE ROBE OF THE EPHOD OF WOVEN WORK, ALL OF BLUE. AND **there was** AN OPENING IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROBE, LIKE THE OPENING IN A COAT OF MAIL, **with** A WOVEN BINDING ALL AROUND THE OPENING, SO THAT IT WOULD NOT TEAR.”

The robe was blue, had an opening in the center so that it could be donned by placing it over the head, much the same as some women’s dresses today or as a pullover shirt. The edge of the neck opening was bound or woven with a selvedge in order to keep it from unraveling from wear.

v.24 “THEY MADE ON THE HEM OF THE ROBE POMEGRANATES OF BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET, AND OF FINE WOVEN **linen**.”

The hem of the garment was decorated with what we might call tassels that were made in the shape of a pomegranate fruit.

v.25 “AND THEY MADE BELLS OF PURE GOLD, AND PUT THE BELLS BETWEEN THE POMEGRANATES ON THE HEM OF THE ROBE ALL AROUND BETWEEN THE POMEGRANATES.”

Then they added gold bells around the hem of the garment, one in between each of the pomegranate shaped tassels.

v.26 “A BELL AND A POMEGRANATE, A BELL AND A POMEGRANATE, ALL AROUND THE HEM OF THE ROBE TO MINISTER IN, AS THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

Again they did all exactly as God had commanded Moses.

v.27-28 “THEY MADE TUNICS, ARTISTICALLY WOVEN OF FINE LINEN, FOR AARON AND HIS SONS, A TURBAN OF FINE LINEN, EXQUISITE HATS OF FINE LINEN, SHORT TROUSERS OF FINE WOVEN LINEN,”

They also made the tunics, the turban for Aaron, the hats for the other priests and the short trousers that the priests wore, as undergarments, under their tunics.

v.29 AND A SASH OF FINE WOVEN LINEN WITH BLUE, PURPLE, AND SCARLET **thread**, MADE BY A WEAVER, AS THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

They next item is the sash or girdle and again we are told that all things were done as Moses commanded.

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v.30-31 “THEN THEY MADE THE PLATE OF THE HOLY CROWN OF PURE GOLD, AND WROTE ON IT AN INSCRIPTION *like* THE ENGRAVING OF A SIGNET: **HOLINESS TO THE LORD**. AND THEY TIED TO IT A BLUE CORD, TO FASTEN *it* ABOVE ON THE TURBAN, AS THE LORD HAD COMMANDED MOSES.”

Lastly, they made the golden plate that was placed on the turban of the high priest like a crown on a king. It was tied with a blue cord to keep it in place and again we are reminded that they did all exactly as the Lord had commanded.

Read Exodus 39:32-43 – Moses Reviews and Blesses the Work.

v.32 “THUS ALL THE WORK OF THE TABERNACLE OF THE TENT OF MEETING WAS FINISHED. AND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED MOSES; SO THEY DID.”

All of the work on the tabernacle, the articles of worship and the garments for the priests has now been completed. Contrary to their history and future practice God causes to be recorded that Israel “DID ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE LORD HAD COMMANDED.”

v.33 “AND THEY BROUGHT THE TABERNACLE TO MOSES, THE TENT AND ALL ITS FURNISHINGS: ITS CLASPS, ITS BOARDS, ITS BARS, ITS PILLARS, AND ITS SOCKETS;”

Now the time has come for Moses to review or inspect the work and make sure that all is as it should be. So the men responsible for the work being done now bring each item to Moses for his inspection. As this is primarily a listing of all the items we have studied at least twice we won't spend much time here unless someone has questions or has something to add to our knowledge.

v.34 “THE COVERING OF RAM SKINS DYED RED, THE COVERING OF BADGER SKINS, AND THE VEIL OF THE COVERING;”

v.35-37 “THE ARK OF THE TESTIMONY WITH ITS POLES, AND THE MERCY SEAT; THE TABLE, ALL ITS UTENSILS, AND THE SHOWBREAD; THE PURE *gold* LAMPSTAND WITH ITS LAMPS (THE LAMPS SET IN ORDER), ALL ITS UTENSILS, AND THE OIL FOR LIGHT;”

v.38-39 “THE GOLD ALTAR, THE ANOINTING OIL, AND THE SWEET INCENSE; THE SCREEN FOR THE TABERNACLE DOOR; THE BRONZE ALTAR, ITS GRATE OF BRONZE, ITS POLES, AND ALL ITS UTENSILS; THE LAVEN WITH ITS BASE;”

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v.40 “THE HANGINGS OF THE COURT, ITS PILLARS AND ITS SOCKETS, THE SCREEN FOR THE COURT GATE, ITS CORDS, AND ITS PEGS; ALL THE UTENSILS FOR THE SERVICE OF THE TABERNACLE, FOR THE TENT OF MEETING;”

v.41 “AND THE GARMENTS OF MINISTRY, TO MINISTER IN THE HOLY *place*: THE HOLY GARMENTS FOR AARON THE PRIEST, AND HIS SONS’ GARMENTS, TO MINISTER AS PRIESTS.”

v.42-43 “ACCORDING TO ALL THAT THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED MOSES, SO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL DID ALL THE WORK. THEN MOSES LOOKED OVER ALL THE WORK, AND INDEED THEY HAD DONE IT; AS THE **LORD** HAD COMMANDED, JUST SO THEY HAD DONE IT. AND MOSES BLESSED THEM.”

Israel had done good and as always when God’s people do His will He is going to bless them. In this case their lawgiver, Moses, pronounces God’s blessing.