

Message #71

Exodus 39:1-43

Ever since Exodus 25, Moses has been telling the people that they needed to bring various colored materials to the Tabernacle project and part of the reason for this was so that they could make the priestly garments. A critical part of worship was the design and the construction of the priestly garments.

It is interesting to observe that in all of the priestly items mentioned here we keep reading “as the LORD had commanded Moses” (39:1, 5, 7, 21, 26, 29, 31, 32, 42, 43). Now we do not read this that often in regard to other things, but we do read this in regard to these priestly garments. Why is that? Well for one reason, as one Biblical scholar observed, the human high priest wearing these garments was a human “the most prominent type of Christ” (George Bush, *Exodus*, p. 285).

All of these things related to the tabernacle were shadow types of Christ, but were not human. The priests were human and of course Jesus Christ would become human. Therefore it was critical that the clothing be exactly the way God had given the specs to Moses.

God had actually commanded Moses that those priests needed to be wearing priestly garments. What we learn from this is this:

IN ORDER TO HAVE TRUE PURE WORSHIP, PRIESTS MUST BE CLOTHED WITH PRECISE, PROPER, PRIESTLY CLOTHING THAT MEETS THE EXACT PRESCRIBED PREREQUISITES OF GOD.

The first thing that we see in **verse 1** is the color scheme that is involved in the garments. This color code was clearly indicative of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Blue represents the fact that He came from heaven. Purple represents the fact that He had kingly royalty. Scarlet represents the fact that the sacrifice and shed blood of Jesus Christ washes away our sins. The fine twisted linen would be white, which would represent the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. It was critical that these priests wear these specific colors because those colors represented the one true priest who could take us into a close relationship with God.

In this chapter there are five main priestly clothing items that were to be carefully constructed:

ITEM #1 – There was to be the construction of the Ephod. **39:2-7**

Now the Ephod was a sleeveless vest that was worn close to the body, which probably extended down just below the hips.

Now **verse 2** gives us the material that was needed to construct the Ephod—gold, blue, purple, scarlet material and fine twisted linen. This was the same material that was used for the inner curtains. Now the singular pronoun “he” of **verse 2** would indicate that Bezalel was the guy who did this.

Now in **verse 3** we learn how the gold could be blended in with the yarn and linen; it needed to be hammered into sheets and then cut. Now apparently what was done is that the gold was hammered and then cut into thin strands and interwoven with the yarn and linen. It is a known fact that metal workers can hammer gold into sheets as thin as “a thousandth of an inch” (Douglas Stuart, *Exodus*, p. 778). These thin slices of gold enable the gold to have durability and flexibility.

One scholar observed what we have here is the most ancient record of how gold could be made into thin wires that became threads that could be interwoven with cloth (Bush, p. 285). We aren't quite sure how the thread of gold was weaved into the cloth, but one thing would be for sure and that is it would have been beautiful.

Verse 4 informs us that they attached the front of the vest together by attaching the shoulder pieces. Now we learn from **verse 5** that this is being skillfully designed “just as the LORD had commanded Moses.” So the specs are being followed very carefully and Moses is over-seeing every bit of this.

According to **verses 6-7** there were two onyx stones which contained the names of the sons of Israel. The names of the sons of Israel were engraved on these stones. Now engraving on a stone is not easy when the stone is large. Engraving on stones this size would not be easy. These stones were mounted on the shoulder area and would be a constant reminder that the priest had a sacred privilege of carrying out ministry for Israel. Priests need to always remember the fact that they are ministers for God.

This would have produced a patterned cloth that would have sparkled bright and yet would have been very flexible and very comfortable to wear.

ITEM #2 – There was to be the construction of the Breastpiece. **39:8-21**

This was a beautiful vest that went over the Ephod. This construction almost follows verbatim with what was described in 28:15-28. But **verse 16** adds something to the construction and that is “two gold filigree settings.” The word “filigree” refers to the fine thread that was being used to weave this together.

Again we point out the fact that at the end of **verse 21**, we read “just as the LORD had commanded Moses.” What this means is that everything that is being made here has been specifically designed by God.

Now we may recall that this breastpiece was a perfect square that was doubled over (**v. 9**). It was a span long which is about 9 inches and a span wide which is about 9 inches.

There were four rows of very expensive stones mounted on this (**v. 10**). These stones each had one of the tribes of Israel engraved on it (**39:14**). Again we are talking here about very technical engraving work.

In row 1 was the ruby (deep red), topaz (golden yellow) and emerald (green). (v. 10)

In row 2 was the turquoise (blue-green), sapphire (blue) and diamond (clear/smoky). (v.11)

In row 3 was the jacinth (orange red), agate (brown/white) and amethyst (deep purple). (v.12)

In row 4 was the beryl (greenish blue), onyx (different colors/black) and jasper (brown/red). (v. 13)

Now again this shows us how special and beautiful Israel is to God. As we said many weeks ago, Aaron is not wearing a robe containing the names of the Muslims or Mormons; but of the twelve sons of Israel.

ITEM #3 – There was to be the construction of the Robe. **39:22-26**

Now the robe was made all in blue (v. 22). This of course was a color code that symbolized the heavenly nature of this robe.

This robe had an opening at the top and covered the front and back of the priest from shoulder to foot. Now we may observe from **verse 23** that this was an opening on the robe that was like the opening “of a coat of mail.” Now this coat of mail was a small coat made of iron rings which covered the neck and breast area. It was very light and it protected from a blow of a sword. Throughout the robe were pomegranate shaped tassels that were interspersed with gold bells.

What is added at the end of **verse 26** is that this is a robe that was to be worn in service, while one was ministering for God. There are things to be done and worn in worship that are not to be done or worn anywhere else.

ITEM #4 – There was to be the construction of the Tunic/coats. **39:27**

Now the tunics were the special robes that were made for Aaron’s sons. We may recall that if Aaron’s sons tried to minister without wearing these things, they could literally die (28:43). It was imperative that people who ministered for God be dressed properly. Now what is stated in **verse 27** is that they were to be made of finely twisted linen.

Now fine linen robes were worn by all kinds of priests. The Egyptian priests wore their robes everywhere they went. God’s priests were to only wear these robes when they were ministering for Him.

ITEM #5 – There was to be the construction of the Turbans. **39:28-31**

The turban was a very sacred hat that needed to be worn by the priest. There was a gold plate on the turban that had an engraving on it that said, “Holy to the Lord.” This was to be specially designed in the precise way God demanded.

MOSES GIVES HIS FINAL INSPECTION OF ALL TABERNACLE WORK–39:32-43.

Everything had been carefully designed and built and now it was time for Moses to give his inspection. What is so interesting is that Moses did not have the skill to build, but he did have the authority to inspect.

On September 30, 2014, we were given a certificate of Occupancy for this church. Here is the way it reads:

“The building or described portion of the building has been inspected for compliance with the requirements of this code for the group and division of occupancy and the use for which the proposed occupancy is classified...”.

This simple document gave us the right to have services in the very sanctuary in which we are sitting.

In **verses 32-43**—we get the final inspection of Moses. Moses is the construction inspector. He will examine everything in this project to see that it meets code. The code of course is the code designed by God.

In **verse 32** we read “all” tabernacle work was completed in complete conformity to all that God had commanded. Moses had given the commands to the builders and everything was done so now it was time for Moses to inspect things.

Now in **verses 33-41**, we get an inspection chronology. There are nine inspections in this chronological order:

Inspection Chronology #1 - The inspection of the tent and all the hardware necessary for setting up the tent. **39:33**

Inspection Chronology #2 - The inspection of all the coverings for the tent including the veils. **39:34**

Inspection Chronology #3 - The inspection of the ark and the poles and the mercy seat. **39:35**

Inspection Chronology #4 - The inspection of the table and all things connected with it. **39:36**

Inspection Chronology #5 - The inspection of the lampstand and all things connected with it. **39:37**

Inspection Chronology #6 - The inspection of the gold altar and all things with it and the veil for the doorway. **39:38**

Moses was actually inspecting the oil and the incense to see that it was up to God's code.

Inspection Chronology #7 - The inspection of the bronze altar and all things connected with it. **39:39**

Inspection Chronology #8 - The inspection of all things connected to the courtyard. **39:40**

Inspection Chronology #9 - The inspection of all the priestly garments. **39:41**

According to **verse 42**, the sons of Israel did all the work according to all that God had commanded Moses.

Verse 43 makes it clear that Moses examined everything and when he completed his inspection, he "blessed them."

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. Worship is very serious business in the sight of God.**
- 2. God's people need to be very precise in the way they interpret Scripture.**
- 3. One day there will be a careful inspection made of everyone.**