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## **Exodus 39**

(2020)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Exodus 39.

(A brief overview of the main topics).

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### Topics.

- The holy garments for Aaron the high priest.
- The ephod and the two onyx stones.
- The breastpiece for the high priest.
- Twisted chains like cords of pure gold.
- The robe of the ephod.
- The sash of blue purple and scarlet yarn.
- The Holy Crown of pure gold.
- All the work of the tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting is finished.

**INTRODUCTION:** in the book of Exodus, God fulfilled His promise to Abraham by multiplying Abraham's descendants into a great nation delivering them from slavery in Egypt to journey to the Promised Land, and then binding them to Himself with a covenant at Mount Sinai. Moses, under the direct command of God and as leader of Israel, received the Ten Commandments from God, along with other laws governing Israel's life and worship. He also led the nation in building the Tabernacle, a place where God's presence can dwell among his people and where they can make sacrifices for sin. Most Jews and Christians recognise Moses as the author, writing sometime after the Exodus from Egypt (about 1445 B.C.). Note: the promise God made to Abraham will be perfectly fulfilled when Christ returns in glory and all those (Jews and Gentiles) who belong to God's Kingdom are gathered to him. (See also the introduction to chapter one).

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**NOTE:** for information of people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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### EXODUS 39:1-5

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#### The Holy Garments for Aaron the High Priest.

- **Exodus 39:1-3:** From the blue and purple and scarlet yarns they made finely woven garments, for ministering in the Holy Place. They made the holy garments for Aaron, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>2</sup>He made the ephod of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. <sup>3</sup>And they hammered out gold leaf, and he cut it into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet yarns, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design. <sup>4</sup>They made for the ephod attaching shoulder pieces, joined to it at its two edges. <sup>5</sup>And the skillfully woven band on it was of one piece with it and made like it, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The high priest's ceremonial robes were rich in colour and skilfully woven together. The ephod was a very beautiful and very skilfully embroidered garment, believed to look much like an apron with shoulder straps. It was worn by Hebrew priests in ancient Israel for ministering in the Holy Place. The high priests' garments were known as the garments of glory and beauty. When Aaron the high priest ministered before the LORD and before the people, he typified the beauty and glory of the true High Priest to come the Lord Jesus Christ.

**The Ephod and the Two Onyx Stones.**

- **Exodus 39:6-7:** They made the onyx stones, enclosed in settings of gold filigree, and engraved like the engravings of a signet, according to the names of the sons of Israel.  
<sup>7</sup>And he set them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod to be stones of remembrance for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The ephod was made of linen with gold, blue, purple and scarlet it was made of two pieces, one for the back and one for the front, both pieces were clasped together at the shoulder by two onyx stones set in gold on the two shoulder straps. Each of these onyx stones was engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. Six names were carried on one shoulder and six on the other. This meant that every time the high priest went into the Holy Place to minister before the LORD and on behalf of the people, he bore the names of the twelve tribes before the LORD. The high priest ceremonial garments with all their rich colours and materials typifies:

- Christ in his high priestly ministry.
- Christ, the High Priest bearing his people upon his shoulders, (the place of strength and seat of power).
- Christ, the High Priest carrying the burden alone (the shoulders also speak of carrying a burden).

The stones on the breastplate represented the twelve tribes of Israel and were worn before the LORD as a memorial. They symbolise:

- The oneness of the people of God (the twelve stones were side by side in one breastplate).
- God's affection for His people (the position of the stones was upon the high priests' breast).
- The affection of Christ toward the faithful (the names on the breastplate were always close to the high priests' heart)

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**EXODUS 39:8-14**

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**The Breastpiece for the High Priest.**

- **Exodus 39:8-14:** He made the breastpiece, in skilled work, in the style of the ephod, of gold, blue and purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. <sup>9</sup>It was square. They made the breastpiece doubled, a span its length and a span its breadth when doubled. <sup>10</sup>And they set in it four rows of stones. A row of sardius, topaz, and carbuncle was the first row; <sup>11</sup>and the second row, an emerald, a sapphire, and a diamond; <sup>12</sup>and the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; <sup>13</sup>and the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. They were enclosed in settings of gold filigree. <sup>14</sup>There were twelve stones with their names according to the names of the sons of Israel. They were like signets, each engraved with its name, for the twelve tribes.

The breastplate was approximately twenty-two centimetres square and worn over the ephod. On the front of the breastplate were fastened twelve precious stones in four rows of three. On each of these stones were engraved the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. It was held in place by golden chains attached to the onyx shoulder clasps and also by blue lace ribbons, which attached the breastplate to the ephod. On each corner was a small golden ring to which the golden chains and ribbons were connected.

1. The first row had a sardius, topaz and carbuncle stone.
2. The second row had an emerald, a sapphire and a diamond.
3. The third row had a jacinth, an agate and an amethyst stone.
4. The fourth row had a beryl, an onyx, and jasper stone.

Each stone represented a tribe of Israel. Each one of these stones are rare, enormously valuable and precious in our world, so they shine a spotlight on how valuable and precious the faithful are to the LORD.

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## EXODUS 39:15-21

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### Twisted Chains like Cords, of Pure Gold.

- **Exodus 39:15-21:** And they made on the breastpiece twisted chains like cords, of pure gold. <sup>16</sup>And they made two settings of gold filigree and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two edges of the breastpiece. <sup>17</sup>And they put the two cords of gold in the two rings at the edges of the breastpiece. <sup>18</sup>They attached the two ends of the two cords to the two settings of filigree. Thus they attached it in front to the shoulder pieces of the ephod. <sup>19</sup>Then they made two rings of gold, and put them at the two ends of the breastpiece, on its inside edge next to the ephod. <sup>20</sup>And they made two rings of gold, and attached them in front to the lower part of the two shoulder pieces of the ephod, at its seam above the skillfully woven band of the ephod. <sup>21</sup>And they bound the breastpiece by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, so that it should lie on the skillfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastpiece should not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The breastpiece was placed over the heart of the high priest who stood before the LORD on the people's behalf. This breastpiece was skillfully made, beautiful to behold, precious and very rare all symbols of how precious the twelve tribes of Israel were to God and by extension how precious all the faithful are to God

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## EXODUS 39:22-26

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### The Robe of the Ephod.

- **Exodus 39:22-26:** He also made the robe of the ephod woven all of blue, <sup>23</sup>and the opening of the robe in it was like the opening in a garment, with a binding around the opening, so that it might not tear. <sup>24</sup>On the hem of the robe they made pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. <sup>25</sup>They also made bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates all around the hem of the robe, between the pomegranates— <sup>26a</sup>a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate around the hem of the robe for ministering, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The robe of the ephod was a plain blue sleeveless garment worn directly beneath the ephod. It most likely extended some inches below the ephod. Embroidered upon its hem was a row of pomegranates with tinkling golden bells which sounded as the priest moved.

- The sound of the bells brought a certain joy so could be seen as symbols of listening to God while in His service.
- The pomegranates speak of fruitfulness (i.e., abundant seeds) and can therefore be seen symbols of the word of God as sweet and pleasant spiritual food. In Exodus chapter twenty-eight it is written:
- On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, around its hem, with bells of gold between them, <sup>34a</sup>a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe. <sup>35</sup>And it shall be on Aaron when he ministers, and its sound shall be heard when he goes into the Holy Place before the LORD, and when he comes out, so that he does not die (Exod. 28:33-35).

The sound of the bells could be heard when Aaron went into the Most Holy Place before the LORD, and the listening people would know that he had not been struck dead in God's presence, but that his offering on their behalf had been accepted by God.

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## EXODUS 39:27-29

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### The Sash of Blue Purple and Scarlet Yarn.

- **Exodus 39:27-29:** They also made the coats, woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, <sup>28</sup>and the turban of fine linen, and the caps of fine linen, and the linen undergarments of fine twined linen, <sup>29</sup>and the sash of fine twined linen and of blue and purple and scarlet yarns, embroidered with needlework, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The two pieces of the ephod (the front and the back) were made to be as one garment by a sash (or girdle) of blue, purple, and scarlet linen intertwined with golden threads tied around the priest's waist. In the language of Scripture for a priest to be girded with his sash was for him to be fully arrayed in his garments and prepared and ready to serve. The front of the ephod could be seen as the faithful Jews of the Old Covenant and the back of the ephod as the faithful of the New Covenant who came after them being united together as one by the sash being a symbol of Christ

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## EXODUS 39:30-31

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### The Holy Crown of Pure Gold.

- **Exodus 39:30-31:** They made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription, like the engraving of a signet, "Holy to the LORD" (HOLINESS TO THE LORD in the KJV) <sup>31</sup>And they tied to it a cord of blue to fasten it on the turban above, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Holy Crown for the priest was not a crown, as we understand crowns. It was a flat piece of Gold with HOLY TO THE LORD engraved on it and tied or fastened onto the Priest's Turban. The high priest wore this turban (also called a mitre) in coils around his head made of fine linen. On the front of the mitre on the high priests' forehead (attached by a blue lace ribbon) there was the golden plate engraved HOLINESS TO THE LORD. This was a constant reminder of the holiness of the covenant of Israel and the holiness of the high priest in his calling.

In Leviticus chapter nineteen the LORD said to Moses:

- Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them, "Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy (Lev. 19:2).

And in Exodus chapter twenty-eight it is written:

- You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, like the engraving of a signet: HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD" (Exod. 28:36-38).

By being clothed in such rich and royal garments, the high priest outwardly symbolised the rich beauty of God that lies hidden within the faithful and the visible eye-catching and prominent position of the golden plate upon the high priest's forehead proclaiming HOLINESS TO THE LORD gave special meaning and character to all of his garments and to his office. For those seeking God and eternal life the high priest of the Old Testament was the most important man on earth and for those seeking God and eternal life in the New Testament the final High Priest (the Lord Jesus Christ) is still the most important man who ever walked on earth.

**The symbolism:** the sons of Aaron's were ordained priests, though not in the glorious robes of the high priest and secondary to his status speak of today's believers; while Aaron, the high priest, in his garments of glory and beauty, speaks of Christ our great High Priest.

**It should be said:** those who dress today in religious garments of glory and beauty as Aaron the high priest of the Old Testament did are still living under the Old Covenant and most likely deceiving the naive into thinking that they are holier than those who sit under their ministry. No one living today who ministers for the Lord needs to put on religious garments to make themselves appear outwardly holy or for any other reason the only clothing the Lord requires his servants to put on is humbleness, faithfulness, honesty, integrity, compassion, kindness, mercy and grace and an attitude that desires the best for others

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## EXODUS 39:32-43

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### **All the Work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting is Finished.**

- **Exodus 39:32-43:** Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished, and the people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. <sup>33</sup>Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its utensils, its hooks, its frames, its bars, its pillars, and its bases; <sup>34</sup>the covering of tanned rams' skins and goatskins, and the veil of the screen; <sup>35</sup>the ark of the testimony with its poles and the mercy seat; <sup>36</sup>the table with all its utensils, and the bread of the Presence; <sup>37</sup>the lampstand of pure gold and its lamps with the lamps set and all its utensils, and the oil for the light; <sup>38</sup>the golden altar, the anointing oil and the fragrant incense, and the screen for the entrance of the tent; <sup>39</sup>the bronze altar, and its grating of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the basin and its stand; <sup>40</sup>the hangings of the court, its pillars, and its bases, and the screen for the gate of the court, its cords, and its pegs; and all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; <sup>41</sup>the finely worked garments for ministering in the Holy Place, the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and the garments of his sons for their service as priests. <sup>42</sup>According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the people of Israel had done all the work. <sup>43</sup>And Moses saw all the work, and behold, they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, so had they done it. Then Moses blessed them.

The people of Israel did all that the LORD had commanded Moses and all the work of the tabernacle (also called the tent of meeting) was finished. We are told Moses saw all the work the people had done as the LORD had commanded them. Imagine how thrilled Moses must have been when he saw all the people bringing all that they had done for the Tabernacle and seeing it all come together as a complete whole as the LORD had told him. Obviously, Moses was overjoyed that the people had such willing hearts to give so abundantly to the work of the LORD so much so that he in some way blessed them.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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