



Study Guide: Exodus – Chapter 39

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This study guide provides an educational overview of Exodus Chapter 39 using a verse-by-verse structure, theological context, and application-oriented insights grounded in Scripture.

Introduction

Exodus Chapter 39 serves as a detailed account of the fulfillment of God’s instructions given earlier for the construction of the priestly garments and the Tabernacle’s sacred elements. This chapter contributes to the book’s flow by demonstrating the faithfulness and precision with which the Israelites obeyed God’s commands through Moses. Readers should watch for the emphasis on obedience, craftsmanship, and the symbolic significance of the priestly attire, which prepares the way for the priests’ role in mediating between God and His people.

Context

The immediate literary context of Exodus 39 is the detailed description of the Tabernacle’s construction and the preparation of the priestly garments, following the divine blueprint given in chapters 25 through 31. This chapter continues the covenantal narrative where God establishes His presence among Israel through the Tabernacle. The key figures involved include Moses, who oversees the work, and the skilled artisans Bezalel and Oholiab, who lead the craftsmanship. The setting is the wilderness encampment of Israel during their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, emphasizing obedience to God’s covenant commands.

Outline

The chapter can be divided into several movements beginning with the making of the priestly garments, including the tunics, sashes, and headpieces. It then moves to the crafting of the ephod, a special garment worn by the high priest, followed by the breastpiece adorned with twelve precious stones representing the tribes of Israel. The narrative continues with the construction of the robe of the ephod, the turban, and the golden plate inscribed with “Holy to the Lord.” The chapter concludes with the presentation of all these completed items to Moses, confirming that every detail was made



exactly as God commanded.

Verse-by-Verse Study

Verses 1-3: The chapter opens with the making of the ephod from gold, blue, purple, and scarlet yarn, and finely twisted linen. Skilled artisans use gold threads to create a richly embroidered garment, fulfilling the precise instructions given earlier.

Verses 4-7: The two onyx stones are prepared and engraved with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each stone, symbolizing the high priest bearing the people before God.

Verses 8-21: The breastpiece is crafted with great care, incorporating twelve precious stones set in gold filigree, each representing a tribe of Israel. The breastpiece is attached to the ephod with gold chains and settings, emphasizing its sacred function.

Verses 22-31: The robe of the ephod is made of blue cloth with pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn around the hem, alternating with golden bells. This design is significant for the priest's movements to be heard as he ministers.

Verses 32-37: The turban and the golden plate inscribed with "Holy to the Lord" are fashioned and attached, signifying the consecration and holiness required of the high priest as he approaches God.

Verses 38-43: The chapter closes by describing the making of other garments for Aaron and his sons, including tunics, sashes, and headbands. All items are completed exactly as the Lord commanded through Moses, and the artisans bring them to Moses for inspection.

Key Themes

One key theme is the faithfulness in obedience to God's detailed instructions, highlighting the importance of precision in worship and service. Another theme is the symbolism embedded in the priestly garments, which represent holiness, mediation, and the identity of Israel as God's chosen people. The chapter also underscores the role of craftsmanship and dedication in sacred work, showing that worship involves both spiritual and practical commitment.

Cross-References



Exodus 28 provides the original instructions for the priestly garments, clarifying the significance of each piece described in chapter 39. Leviticus 8 offers insight into the consecration of Aaron and his sons, connecting the garments to their priestly function. Hebrews 7 discusses the role of Jesus as the ultimate high priest, offering a New Testament perspective on the symbolic meaning of these garments. These cross-references deepen understanding of the chapter's focus on holiness and mediation.

Application

Modern disciples can learn from the meticulous obedience displayed in this chapter, recognizing that worship and service to God require attention to detail and reverence. The craftsmanship reminds believers that spiritual gifts and talents are to be used in dedicated service to God's purposes. The symbolism of the garments encourages reflection on the holiness required in approaching God, inspiring personal consecration and a commitment to live distinctively as God's people.

Summary

Exodus 39 documents the faithful execution of God's commands regarding the priestly garments, emphasizing obedience, holiness, and the sacred role of the priests. The chapter highlights the intricate craftsmanship and symbolic meaning of each garment, culminating in the presentation of these holy items to Moses. This detailed fulfillment underscores the covenant relationship between God and Israel, preparing the way for the priests to mediate God's presence among His people.