119 MINISTRIES

"The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below."

No Fire on the Sabbath?

Have you ever been told that there is not to be any fire on the Sabbath?

Exodus 35:2-3 (NKJV)

> Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD [YHWH]. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.

For those studying the commandments of Elohim with a desire to apply its truth, and not forsake truth, this commandment can often result in some understandable confusion. Quite often we witness the House of Judah, or Jews, applying this commandment in certain circumstances and in such a way that it appears rather extreme. On the flip side, those in mainstream Christianity witness and study what orthodox Jews have done with this verse, and immediately demand the *same application* from anyone teaching obedience to all of Elohim's commandments. As if, the Jews understand everything about God's Word, perfectly. They are supposedly implying that if one believes all of the Old Testament to still be true, then, the Jews are the perfect example to emulate. Sadly, this is often done in order to supposedly prove the futility of applying God's commandments for today. That any attempt to keep Yahweh's commandments is obviously absurd and that men have clearly evolved beyond such outdated commandments. In such an approach, other commandments are discarded as well…lumping them into one convenient outdated basket…*all because it is understood that one of the supposed purposes of the Messiah was to change the law of God as taught by Paul*.

It can all quickly become such a mess. The over-the-top Jewish interpretation of this verse then becomes an *obstacle* for mainstream Christians in understanding the whole truth of the Word. Likewise, it is also often an obstacle for the House of Judah (Jews) as a *doctrinal distraction from the true intent, purpose, and wonderful joy of the Sabbath* that has been given to us. Some of the traditional "Jewish" practices as it relates to Exodus 35:3 would appear rather odd to many. *How can we, or do we, make sense of this?*

Some of those odd practices include only using special elevators that do not create a spark, the refusing

to drive cars, or the avoiding many of other such things that can be even loosely interpreted as involving a fire on the Sabbath. While it must be admitted that such restraint and prohibitions are certainly affording parameter guidelines that prevent the breaking of this commandment in the *literal* or *even beyond*, at the same time, the entire point and obedience to this commandment is simply being missed. In reality, that can become the larger issue. We should consider the teachings of our Lord Yeshua (Jesus) in Mark 7:5-16.

Mark 7:15 (ESV)

> "There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him."

We certainly do not want to add or subtract from the Law of God (Deuteronomy 4:2), however, nor do we want to invent traditions that replace the intent and purpose of the law of God.

Deuteronomy 4:2 (ESV)

> You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord (YHWH) your God (Elohim) that I command you.

Now let's focus on the whole context of Mark 7:5-16.

Mark 7:5-16

> Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk *according to the tradition of the elders*, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do." When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

There is an interpretive balance that requires us to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15), meaning *there is also a wrong way to divide the truth.*

2 Timothy 2:15 (NASB)

> Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, *accurately handling the word of truth*.

The Word of God is certainly sharper than a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), but sometimes our personal doctrines can really dull and dilute the truth.

Hebrews 4:12 (NASB)

> For the *Word of God is living* and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as

> far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and *able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

However, those who really desire to worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:24) and obey the truth (Romans 2:8) will seek these things out.

John 4:24 (NASB)

> **…**God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Romans 2:8 (NASB)

> …but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation.

Sometimes in our studies *we forget the inclusion of context in hermeneutics* to assist us in establishing *correct understanding and application* of God's Word. Sometimes the best question we could ask is why?

Why would God not want us to light a fire on the Sabbath?

That is a very simple question, but offers profound interpretive benefit and hermeneutical application. In verse three we find that the fire is not to be "kindled" in the "dwellings." Does this mean that if I am in a forest in the middle of nowhere, away from any "dwellings," that I can create a fire? Technically, the answer is yes, if I already have my wood and I am not working to collect that wood to create a fire.

Numbers 15:32-36 (NASB)

> Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. Then the Lord (YHWH) said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the Lord (YHWH) had commanded Moses.

We can only conclude that there must be a reason why God is focusing on the "dwellings" of those during this time period as it relates to "kindling a fire."

What purpose did the fires in the "dwellings" serve as opposed to any random fire one might kindle?

The telling difference is embedded in the intent and purpose of the commandment, established in the prior verse.

Exodus 35:2-3

> Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD (YHWH). Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.

The fire we are not to kindle is a fire clearly related to work in some way. This makes sense because the central point of the Sabbath is resting. Thus, it is not necessarily the fire itself that is the issue, as some

make it out to be. *We should not be focusing on the fire,* but the *work*. Which is the opposite of rest, it is the opposite of the intent of the Sabbath…Anyone focused on the fire has completely missed the point Yahweh was trying to make in His instruction.

This help explain the difference between the focus on "kindling a fire" in "dwellings" and simply not just anywhere. If it was all about not kindling a fire *anywhere* then Yahweh would not have limited the instruction about fire on the Sabbath to just the dwellings. Obviously, the fire in the dwelling serves a purpose, and *somehow that purpose is contrary to resting*. This begins to speak to what effort it takes to prepare and produce the fire, or what the fire is intended to serve, which is *daily work*.

In the Middle East thousands of years ago, or even today, a fire was a central element to facilitate much of the daily work activity. Cooking, cleaning, tool and supply production, are all examples of daily work that required a fire. *The type of fire God is referring to, is a fire to support working*. Not only was it a burden of work to prepare for that fire (thus do any such activity before or after the Sabbath) but the fire in context of the dwelling, is also *intended to serve the working person*. This means that one who creates a fire on the Sabbath is intending to work. This is the relationship between, *fire* and *work*; God defines in the context that occurred in the "dwellings." This commandment would have been correctly interpreted in this way by those intended to receive it when Moses delivered it. They understood that—*should we not also understand it in the same way? Should we ignore that, or apply that?*

Those who are all caught up in commandments of men and believe that they are to not push a button or turn on a switch, may or may not have their heart in the right place, *but they are certainly missing the intended message God is speaking to regarding this commandment.* God is simply stating to not only rest on the day He created for rest, but to not even prepare for or think of work when we are to be resting and focusing on Him. There are principles we can take from this commandment and also apply to our modern circumstances. Each believer should consider these things in their walk. For those who believe there is no modern application here; have given this matter *little thought* in our work saturated daily lives and busy minds.

Presumably, when the prohibition was presented, kindling fire was indeed "work." Starting a fire was not as simple as flipping a lighter today or pushing a button. Nor is creating fire today intended (quite often) to serve our daily work. Some cultures today still use fire as the central need for daily work. *We need to examine and apply these things through the eyes of the Giver and receiver of the commandment, not whatever interpretive glasses that we are wearing at the time.* Every Bible scholar should agree with such a statement.

There is a mainstream practical usage of fire today that is not related to work and was not present in the context of Exodus 35:2-3. More often than not, simply keeping warm in colder climates comes to mind as such an example. In such circumstances, applying Exodus 35:2-3 today as intended would mean having one's preparation for a fire done before the Sabbath, and then using the fire to keep a household warm, but not for daily work. The obvious critical difference to recognize and ask as it relates to Exodus 35:2-3 is this; *is the fire intended and used for work?* How that question is answered defines the type of fire and thus enabling the correct application of Exodus 35:2-3.

If this was not the case, are we to believe that those in the first century, talking and studying to the wee hours of the morning during weekly Shabbat fellowship, *were not using candles or lanterns*? Of course they were. They were doing this *before and after the cross*. Would that not be defined as lighting a fire in a dwelling? Technically it would. That means that they understood Exodus 35 in the context in which it was given. *Lighting a fire in a dwelling does not violate Yahweh's commandments as long as it*

is not being done for work, or work to prepare for and maintain the fire on the Sabbath. Are we to believe that they were just sitting around in the dark? That would be just plain silly!

The context of Exodus 35:2-3 is related to our work activity, or simply not resting, unless we want to ignore the verse prior to verse three.

"Kindling a fire" meant something in the context in which it was given. Can it not be agreed that we should practice the commandment as it was given?

The conclusion of the matter is this. *We should not work to create a fire that is intended to support more work.* That is the *only way* the commandment could have been interpreted when it was given. Such an interpretation completely makes sense given the whole point of the Sabbath in itself.

So the question becomes this:

- Should we apply the commandment as it was intended to be interpreted or *should we apply it how our culture would interpret it?*
- Should the interpretations of the commandments of God change based on every new generation, or *should we interpret them through the generation in which they were given?*
- Should interpretation be based on the culture of the reader or the culture of those present and living when the text was given?

Hopefully these questions will expose the common sense that we should use in our understanding of Scripture. This is not as complicated as some have made it out to be. Some actually do desire this commandment to be that complicated because they *love* their "traditions of the fathers" (Mark 7). Some even want this commandment to be that complicated to use it as an *excuse to abandon the Sabbath* rest that was made for us.

The reality is that it is not that complicated. *We are to rest, not work. That is for our benefit.* We are to not work, or force anyone else to work, nor consume ourselves with preparing or thinking about work on a set-apart or holy day. *Why would we want to work when He says to rest?* We might just find that *focusing on God* (the Word) instead of traditions of men or things of the world just happens to *resonate well with our spirit*. If something about ignoring the daily burdens of the world and entering into the weekly freedom of spending time with God and His family on the Sabbath is frightening and a burden to us, then we have much more complex issues to address rather than the simple matters of obedience. *Resting* and spending time with Yahweh and His family is a blessing *not a burden*. It shows our *love* for *Him*.

1 John 5:2-3 (NKJV)

> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

The focus of the Sabbath is Yahweh and resting, not creating a fire to work. It is as simple as that. Some have interpreted that not kindling a fire on Shabbat means to not become angry as a metaphor. That very well could be the case, however, did our Creator ever become angry with Israel on Shabbat? Yes, of course. Does our Creator sin? Is He our example? Yes, He is. How we treat anger, or the reasons for anger should not be different on Shabbat than any other day.

We address this because sometimes we receive this question,

"*Could kindling a fire be a reference to arguing/debating, and that is what we are not to do on Shabbat?"*

We already mentioned where YHWH, himself, got angry on Shabbat. So we know that getting angry on Shabbat is not a sin as YHWH does not sin. But what about arguing or debating?

Well, that doesn't really fit either. Although we have seen teachings that go to great lengths to attempt to show that kindling a fire is metaphorical and not literal, we need to consider the evidence against that position.

Yeshua, Paul, and likely countless others argued and debated on the Sabbaths. In fact, in one mention in Acts, it was said to be Paul's custom to do just that. (Acts 18:4)

We hope that some are not going to suggest that Yeshua and Paul were guilty of sin because they argued and debated on the Sabbath. They even intentionally got others angry on the Sabbath because of what they were teaching.

Not kindling a fire on the Sabbath is not intended to be metaphorical, but literal. Making that commandment metaphorical causes more problems than it solves. The point is this, not kindling a fire is a literal commandment but must be interpreted within the context of the commandment to rest and the culture in which that commandment was given.

We hope that this study has blessed you...*and remember continue to test everything***.**

Shalom

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries
WEBSITE: www.TestEverthing.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net
TWITTER: www.twitter.com/119Ministries#