

Shabbat Shalom



You shall kindle **no fire** throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day. ~ Exodus 35:3

KINDLE NO FIRE ON THE SABBATH

By George Lujack

This article will discuss the historic and modern day application of the Exodus 35:3 verse, to kindle no fire on the Sabbath day.

Why does God command us to not kindle a fire on the Sabbath day?

kindle:

To light or set on fire.

EXODUS 35:1-3:

Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, “These are the words which the Lord has commanded you to do: 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. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day.”

When read in its full context, not lighting a fire on the Sabbath day pertains to keeping the Sabbath properly. The question is, Why are we not to light a fire on the Sabbath day?

God does not want us to cook on the Sabbath. Lighting a fire to cook on a stove is labor that is not to be conducted on the Sabbath day.

God wants us to set apart the Sabbath day, as holy and special, from Friday sundown through Saturday sundown. We are not to buy or sell on the Sabbath, nor do any work on the Sabbath, which would include kindling fire and cooking.

MARK 15:42:

Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath...

The Day of Preparation or the Preparation Day is the Friday before the Sabbath. Food is to be prepared beforehand on the Preparation Day to be served throughout the Sabbath. The labor of cooking food shall not be done on the Sabbath day.

TALMUDIC JUDAIC TRADITIONAL SABBATH OBSERVANCE

The traditional Sabbath observance has been taken to extremes and the command to not kindle a fire on the Sabbath is violated in Talmudic Judaism as well as in some Messianic circles.

Formal Talmudic observance of the Shabbat, or Sabbath, begins with the woman of the home lighting the Sabbath candles after Friday sundown as the Sabbath begins. It is customary to light one candle for each member of the household [1].

ISAIAH 50:11:

Look, all you who kindle a fire, who encircle yourselves with sparks: walk in the light of your fire and in the spark you have kindled. This you shall have from My hand: you shall lie down in torment.

The Jewish people certainly have suffered torment since Isaiah was written around 740 B.C. Jewish candle lighting tradition does not trump Scripture. While it can be argued that the command to not kindle a fire on the Sabbath generally pertains to cooking, to rest from the chore of preparing heated meals, the command is not limited to cooking. The Jewish traditional practice of setting up and lighting candles on the Sabbath is not a command from God. Ritualistic candle lighting is associated with the occult and witchcraft, and believers are not to partake in such practices (Deuteronomy 18:10-11). The Sabbath candle lighting tradition is in clear violation of God's command to not kindle a fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day (Exodus 35:3; Isaiah 50:11).

While strict Talmudic Judaism engages in the practice of setting up and kindling fire for candles on the Sabbath, they forbid the use of motor vehicles, electricity, and telephones on the Sabbath. In a traditional Talmudic-observant Jewish home, family members unhook telephones, unscrew light bulbs, and tape switches down so as to not accidentally turn on an electric appliance. They make an electricity exception for their refrigerators, which they leave plugged in so as to keep food from spoilage, but they place tape over the fridge's interior light switch so that the light will not go on when someone opens the refrigerator door. In Israel, building elevators are set on automatic to stop on every floor, so that those who enter the elevator do not need to push an elevator button (considered 'work').

God does not forbid the use of electricity on the Sabbath day. It is not work to flip a switch or to push an elevator button any more than it is work to pluck grain on the Sabbath and eat (Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28).

Overusing electricity by needlessly running electricity continually throughout the Sabbath day, for the sake of refusing to flip a switch, is a waste of God-given blessings of energy, money, and resources.

The Sabbath day is a day of rest and refreshment. It is a day for man to rest, not for the automobiles and electronics that serve man to rest. It is not a command from God to refrain from using a car on the Sabbath day.

Traditional Talmudic Judaic Jews often walk long distances to synagogues for Sabbath observance. Those who have to travel far are often exhausted from their long walks to and from synagogue. The mistake they are making is that the Sabbath is a day of rest for man, not for the automobiles and machines that serve man.

The command to not kindle a fire on the Sabbath day pertains to kindling a fire *within a dwelling*. The igniting and fuel burning of an automobile is done outside a dwelling. A power plant that burns fuel to provide electricity throughout a home is done outside of a dwelling. Not burning a fire at all, anywhere - even outside of a dwelling, is adding to Scripture and we are commanded to not add to His word (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:6).

MARK 2:27:

And Yeshua (Jesus) said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

The Sabbath was made for man, not for our motorized vehicles.

Taking extraordinary measures in observing the Sabbath, such as refusing motorized transport while instead opting to physically exert oneself in walking long distances, is an example of man serving the Sabbath and not being served by the Sabbath. Igniting an automobile's spark plug and fuel system is not kindling a fire within a dwelling, as motorized internal combustion propelled vehicles are transportation machines ignited *outside* of the home that serve and aid us in resting as we travel on the Sabbath.

WHAT IF?

God commands us to kindle no fire in our dwellings on the Sabbath, but what if...

What if you are living in a cold region and the pilot light goes out of your heating system. Would it be OK to kindle a fire to restart your heating system or light a fireplace to keep warm on the Sabbath?

Yes. God does not expect us to freeze to death or get sick due to frigid temperatures for the sake of keeping a component command of the Sabbath.

Yeshua (Jesus) demonstrated to us that we are to observe the Sabbath in deed and spirit, from our heart. We are to do good deeds on the Sabbath.

If an emergency arrives on the Sabbath, we are not to neglect common sense and doing the right thing for the sake of keeping the Sabbath.

MATTHEW 12:12; (LUKE 14:5):

Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”

The Sun does not stop shining on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was meant to serve man and not for man to serve the Sabbath. We are not to light fires in our dwellings on the Sabbath, as we are to rest from all labor including cooking. The Jewish ritual tradition of setting up and lighting candles in the home, as the Sabbath begins, stands in violation of God's law to not kindle (light) a fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day, which is a practice that should not be observed by law-keeping believers.

1. Eckstein, Yechiel, "Shabbat: A Day of Delight," International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, 2015, < http://www.ifcj.org/assets/pdfs/limmud_oct_sabbath_final.pdf >.