

NEW JERUSALEM, NEW EVERYTHING

THESIS: Prepare For Heaven

TEXT: Revelation 21:1-27

OPEN: British Man Lost In Israeli Desert May Suffer From “Jerusalem Syndrome”

By Lukas Mikelionis (*foxnews.com* 01/16/18)

A tourist who went missing in an Israeli desert may be suffering from “Jerusalem Syndrome” according to authorities. 29-year old resident Oliver McAfee vanished on November 21st while cycling through the Negev desert in southern Israel. The so-called “Jerusalem Syndrome” may include having religious delusions such as believing one is the next Messiah or heading to holy places while leaving everyone behind. The “syndrome” usually ends once a person leaves Israel. Authorities initially presumed McAfee got lost on the trail as most of his items, including bike and laptop, were found near the trail by his friends. The search and rescue team found a trail of Bible pages weighed with stones, handwritten scriptures, references to Biblical stories such as the fasting of Jesus in the desert, and a makeshift chapel. One of the leaders of the volunteer search team told the UK Daily Telegraph: “McAfee seems to have been doing all kinds of ceremonies that we don't really understand.”

In **Revelation 21** let's discover how to prepare for Heaven's New Jerusalem and the new everything of eternal life.

1. PREPARE FOR HEAVEN BY TRUSTING THE PROMISES OF GOD.

- A. **Revelation 21:1** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.”
 1. **New** (Greek: *kainos*) denotes fresh or that which is unused in quality or form.
 - a. The blessing of the new Heaven and the new earth is not only a fresh and immortal physical existence, but also a fresh moral and spiritual one.
 1. **Isaiah 35:8** “And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way (of God); wicked fools will not go about on it.”
 2. **Revelation 21:27** “Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.”
 - b. The Jews in Biblical times referenced the sea as a symbol of separation, restlessness, and turbulence.
 1. **Psalms 89:9** “You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, You still them.”
 2. **Revelation 13:1** “And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. He had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on his horns, and on each head a blasphemous name.”
 - a. **Historical:** Beasts were symbols of many pagan nations. During writing of Revelation, Emperor Domitian required people address him as “our lord and god” which is blasphemy.
 - B. **Revelation 21:2** “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”
 1. **Historical:** The name “Jerusalem” means foundation of peace or secure habitation. King David made Jerusalem the capital of Israel in 1,000 B.C. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and was rebuilt by the time of Christ. However, the Romans leveled Jerusalem in 70 A.D. For the 50 years following, Jerusalem disappeared from history. In A.D. 135, a false messiah named Barcocheba led a revolt, got possession of the city, and attempted to rebuild the Temple. The revolt was suppressed by the Roman army. Jews were then forbidden to re-enter Jerusalem, on pain of death. In A.D. 326 under Roman Emperor Constantine, Jerusalem again became a leading Christian center. In the year A.D. 637 Jerusalem fell to the Mohammedans, and remained an Islamic city, except for about 100 years in the Crusade

- Period (*Halley's Bible Handbook*, p. 655-656). In 1538, walls were built around Jerusalem under Suleiman the Magnificent. Today those walls define the Old City, which has been traditionally divided into four quarters—known since the early 19th century as the Armenian, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim quarters. Modern Jerusalem has grown far beyond the Old City's boundaries. During its long history, Jerusalem has been destroyed at least twice, besieged 23 times, attacked 52 times, and captured and recaptured 44 times (*Wikipedia*).
- a. The New Jerusalem represents the church—described in Revelation as a bride-city.
 1. **Revelation 19:7-8** “Let us rejoice and be glad and give God glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and His bride has made herself ready. Fine linen, bright and clean, was given her to wear. (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints).”
 - a. The church as the “wife of the Lamb” depicts God’s communion with His people in festive joy for eternity.
 2. **Revelation 21:9-11a** “One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, ‘Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb.’ And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel...”
 - a. The church as the “Holy City” symbolizes our communion with fellow believers in the vitality of righteousness for eternity.
 - C. **Revelation 21:3-4, 25-26** “And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away...On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.”
 1. **Old order of things** (*protos*) means first or former (order of things).
 - a. **Isaiah 65:17-19** “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in My people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more...”
 2. The passing of the “old order of things” relates to suffering and earthly sojourns.
 - a. **Isaiah 43:16-19a** “This is what the Lord says—He who made a way through the sea, a path through the mighty waters, who drew out the chariots and horses, the army and reinforcements together, and they lay there, never to rise again, extinguished, snuffed out like a wick: Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”
 3. The passing of the “old order of things” relates to sinning and earthly substance.
 - a. **Jeremiah 3:16-17** “‘In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land,’ declares the Lord, ‘men will no longer say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the Lord.’ It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the Lord, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the Lord. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.”

CONCLUSION: Prepare for Heaven by trusting in the promises of God. The Bible speaks of the reward of eternal life in Heaven as the “crown of righteousness” (*2 Timothy 4:8*), the “crown of life” (*James 1:12*), the “crown of glory” (*1 Peter 5:4*).

Historical: In Biblical times a crown was a ruler’s symbol of power and supremacy; for others it was a token of public honor for distinguished service; a bride’s leafy crown represented nuptial joy; for a runner of a race it stood for victory or triumph—of which we have as Christians over sin and death by faith in Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 4:6-8 (Apostle Paul) “For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.”

Eternal (Greek: *aidos*) means immeasurable and uninterrupted time—permanence. **Life** (Greek: *zoe*) signifies a vitality and not just mere existence. In Heaven, life (the quality) is eternal (the quantity) because there is a complete absence of sin there and thus no death.

1 John 4:2-4 “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”

Illustration: Report: Middle East Christians On The Eve Of Destruction

By Simon Kent (*breitbart.com* 01/16/18)

According to a new report from Open Doors UK and Ireland, the territories of Egypt, Jordan, Syria and surrounding areas are among the most dangerous places on earth for Christians. They now constitute no more than 3 to 4 percent of the region’s population, down from 20 per cent a century ago. Hard-line Islamic views and state-sanctioned “religio-ethnic cleansing” are the key drivers behind the Christian genocide. Just 12 months ago, the Islamic State branch that operates in and around Egypt designated the northern African country’s Christian minority their “favorite prey” in a 20-minute propaganda video. Open Doors CEO Lisa Pearce says, “Christians in Egypt face a barrage of discrimination and intimidation, yet they refuse to give up their faith. It is hard for us to imagine being defined by our religion every single day in every sphere of life. In Egypt, as in many other Middle Eastern countries, your religion is stated on your identity card. This makes discrimination and persecution easy—you are overlooked for jobs; planning permits are hard to obtain, and you are a target when you go to church.” Overall, North Korea stands at the top of a list of 50 countries where at least 215 million Christians faced the most severe persecution in 2017, resulting in 3,066 deaths and 1,020 rapes mainly targeting women. The Open Doors report follows previous warnings that Christians in the Middle East are teetering on the eve of destruction.

Revelation 21:5-8 “He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then He said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ He said to me, ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be My son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.’”

Illustration: How One Hawaiian Family Turned 38 Minutes Of Terror Into A Moment Of Gratitude

By Peter Hasson (*dailycaller.com* 01/14/18)

One minute, Jason Jones was running to put the trash out before the garbage truck turned onto his street. The next minute, Jones and his family were running from what they thought was a nuclear missile attack. When Jones, a filmmaker and father of seven, saw the alert, he had one thought: “So it’s today.” Jones prepared and packed his family into the minivan—taking off for a mountain range. He ignored the speed limits. The Joneses would take shelter in nearby Makua Cave. “I told my family, ‘that’s our rally point.’” Jason’s two oldest children, a son and a daughter, are adults and live out of the house. The other five are between the ages of four and eleven. When his oldest daughter called, Jason remembered thinking, “If we don’t intercept this missile, this could be the last time I hear my daughter’s voice.” All across the

island, families were having similar “just in case” conversations in anticipation of a possible missile strike. As the Jones family arrived at the cave, Jason’s phone lit up again: the attack was a false alarm. Relieved, the family took a photo to celebrate. The whole thing was over in just 38 minutes. The Jones children had questions: “Why did this happen? What if it had been real? Would they go to Heaven?” After doing his best to answer their questions, Jason’s message to his children was: “Thank God for this experience,” which represented a chance to feel empathy for families fleeing war in other countries. Rushing your family out of the house, fearful that your children will become casualties of war: that’s an experience most Americans are fortunate enough not to experience. But it’s a grim reality for Christians and other religious minorities persecuted in the Middle East. The Jones family’s flight from war was over in less than an hour. For Christians in Iraq, its lasting years.

CLOSE: Prepare for Heaven by trusting the promises of God for the New Jerusalem and the new everything.