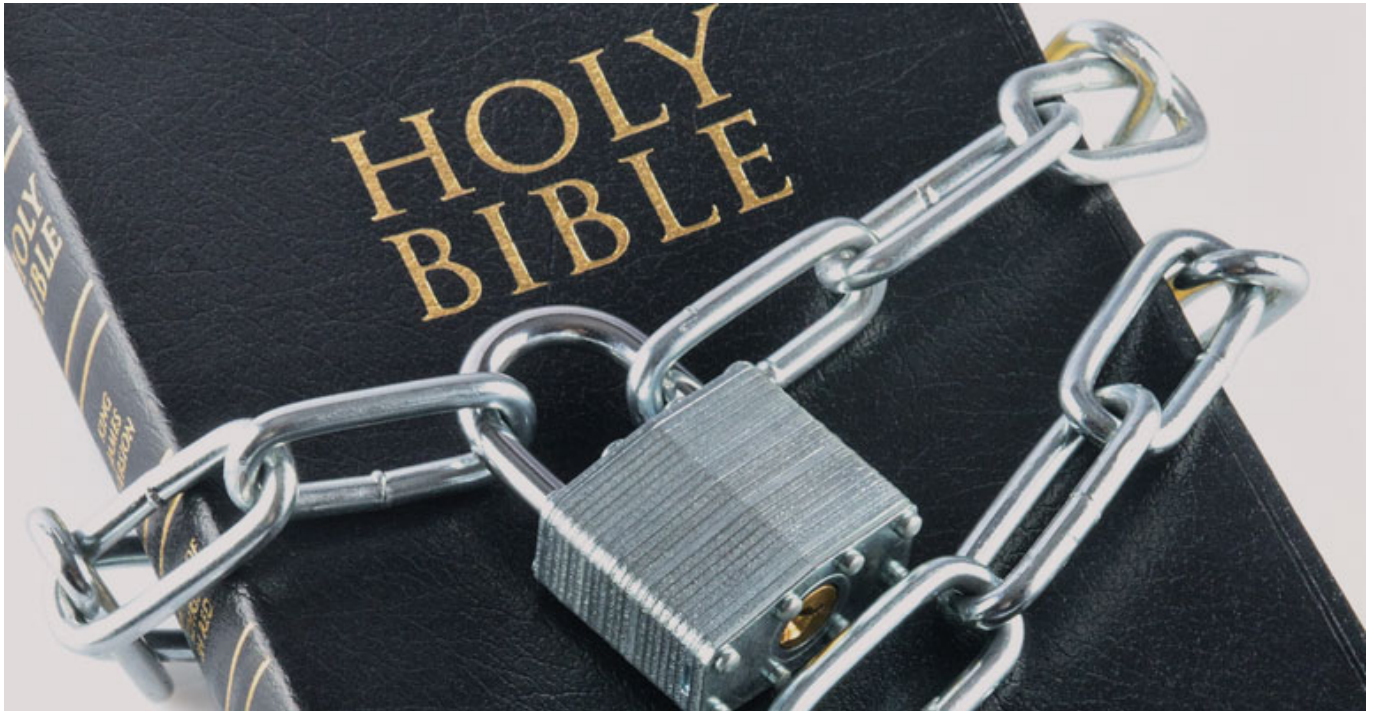


Christian tourists at risk if they display their Bible in public in Saudi Arabia



Saudi Arabia opened its doors to tourists for the first time with the launch of a tourist e-visa on 27 September, but Christian visitors should be aware that displaying a Bible in public, or taking more than one Bible into the country, could place them at risk of arrest.

The new regulations for tourists state that a Bible may be brought into the country provided it is for personal use only. Bibles must not be displayed in public and anyone found bringing a large number of Bibles will face “severe penalties”.

Saudi Arabia follows a strict Wahhabi interpretation of Islam and it is impossible for anyone living in the country to openly practise Christianity. There are hundreds of thousands of Christians from other nations, such as the Philippines, other parts of Asia, or African countries, who are living and working in Saudi Arabia. But they must meet in private homes to worship, and risk harassment, arrest and deportation if they are caught doing so. Saudi citizens who convert to Christianity face risk of execution by the state for apostasy if their conversion becomes known.

- Source: barnabasfund.org