

Unreached Peoples: The Kalash People of Pakistan

by Paul Hattaway

The Kalash people, living in the north of Pakistan, are trapped in animism and idolatry, in need of salvation.

Scripture: Psalm 96:5, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 4:12, Romans 10:13, 1 Timothy 2:5

Topics: "Missions Work", "Prayer Ministry"

Description

This sermon sheds light on the unique culture and spiritual practices of the ancient Kalash people living in Pakistan, emphasizing their isolation, traditional customs, and deep-rooted beliefs in idol worship and superstitions. It calls for prayers for their salvation and highlights the need for spiritual intervention in their lives.

Transcript

The ancient Kalash people live in the fruitful valleys of Bumburet, Rumbur and Berir in the north of Pakistan. They are gentle and friendly people trapped in animism. They are probably descendants of Alexander the Great and therefore family of the Greeks.

Driving into the pretty valley of Kalash is like going into a completely different world. To get to Kalash you must travel over suspended bridges made of old weathered wood and a narrow single lane gravel road cut out of the high steep mountainside. Often these roads collapse or become blocked by rockfalls or avalanches.

The danger of falling down the mountainside is increased by the possibility of traffic coming from the other direction. You will often find the driver of your jeep smoking or chewing marijuana. This make him less afraid of these narrow high roads through the cliffs.

This is the journey to the Kalash valleys. The typical colourful clothing of the Kalash women displays the people's joy. The black dresses the women all wear are heavily embroidered and decorated with colourful beads and shells which can weigh more than 2 kg.

During the day they also wear an embroidered headdress covered in beads and shells with the decoration hanging behind it weighing up to 2 kg. A typical Kalash village has several little houses made of wood, stone and mud. They are built very close to each other, high against the mountain slopes to get the early

morning winter sun.

In the winter snowfalls are up to 2 m deep, the temperature is around minus 20 degrees Celsius and the Kalash are cut off from the rest of the world. The houses have two floors, the top floor is a single room where the whole Kalash family eats and sleeps. There are no windows, only one door and a small hole in the roof which acts as a chimney.

The bottom floor is a storage place for food and a sleeping place for the animals. Even though the valleys are fruitful, soil is in short supply and harvests from crops are very small. Maize, nuts and mulberries are dried for the long winter months.

Nothing is wasted here. Technology arrived only a short time ago for the Kalash. They still barter and maize are ground at the mill.

They bake a flat bread called Au from the maize mill and eat it with vegetables, nuts and goat's cheese. They farm mostly with goats and cattle but also grow small crops. They only grow enough to support themselves.

Stones become toys, amusing children for hours. Clothes are still beaten clean with a stick and water. Women are seen as unclean and may only bathe out of sight of the village and from goats which are seen as clean.

This means that the Kalash don't bathe often, even though there is enough water. Giving birth is also considered unclean and also happens away from the village. If a mother dies during childbirth, the baby is left to die along with her.

Kalash children aren't bathed until they are a year old according to their culture. Women may seldom participate in sacrificial rites where goats are killed as part of idol worship. Before these special feasts, women must be purified and babies are baptized by being sprinkled with goat's milk.

The Kalash have unique burial customs. Until very recently, corpses were left in their coffins above the ground and not buried. Their religion teaches that a dead person's soul is excited to leave the body and be reunited with other souls after being separated from them for such a long time.

They aren't sad when someone dies, but instead celebrate with song and dance. Everything the Kalash do is connected to superstition and the worship of gods, demons and fairies of different rank. The chief god is Dizao, the creator of the universe.

He is supported by angels and there is no altar for this supreme being. The favorite god is Mahandayo and goats are offered at his altar. Yetsak is the goddess of the home.

She has a temple in every village and an altar in each home. The fairies live in golden palaces in the mountains. There is a heaven and a hell and the first people were Adam and Eve.

Goats are offered during festival times to make the gods and goddesses happy. There is a person acting as a medium who asks the spirits' help to make predictions about the weather, the harvest, farming activities as well as the future. The Kalash dance during their feasts and worship and often go into a trance.

The Kalash are caught in the stranglehold of idolatry. Please pray for their salvation. Thank you for watching.

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