

The Image of Gold

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about Nebuchadnezzar's pride leading to idolatry and the deification of man, symbolizing the times of the Gentiles and foreshadowing the end times with the Antichrist. The Faithful Three - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego refuse to worship the golden image and are cast into the fiery furnace, where they are miraculously protected by the Son of God. This event parallels the persecution faced by true worshippers throughout history, especially under papal Rome, with martyrs finding strength and deliverance in God's presence.

Description

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Transcript

the-image-of-gold.pdf txtUrl: "/pdf-text/text/a/arno-clemens-gaebelein---the-image-of-gold.txt"
 thumbnailUrl: "" hasTranscript: true oneLinerSummary: "The sermon explores the themes of idolatry, faithfulness, and God's deliverance in the face of persecution as illustrated by the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego." sermonType: "expository" topics: - name: "Idolatry And Pride" slug: "idolatry-and-pride" - name: "Persecution And Martyrdom" slug: "persecution-and-martyrdom" bibleRefs: - text: "Isaiah 43:2" bookId: "ISA" chapter: "43" verse: "2" - text: "Daniel 3:1-7" bookId: "DAN" chapter: "3" verse: "1" - text: "Revelation 13:1" bookId: "REV" chapter: "13" verse: "1" outline: - heading: "I" points: - "Introduction to Nebuchadnezzar's pride and idolatry" - "The significance of the golden image" - "Connection to the times of the Gentiles" - heading: "II" points: - "The religious aspect of Nebuchadnezzar's decree" - "The role of music in worship" - "Comparison to modern religious practices" - heading: "III" points: - "The Faithful Three: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego" - "Their unwavering faith in the face of persecution" - "The significance of their response to Nebuchadnezzar" - heading: "IV" points: - "The fiery furnace and God's deliverance" - "The presence of the fourth man in the fire" - "Historical parallels of persecution in the church" - heading: "V" points: - "The remnant during the time of the Antichrist" - "The trials and tribulations of God's people" - "The promise of God's presence in suffering" faq: - q: "What does the golden image represent?" a: "The golden image represents the deification of man"

and idolatry during the times of the Gentiles." - q: "How did music play a role in the worship of the image?" a: "Music was used to stir religious emotions and encourage the worship of the idol." - q: "What was the response of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to the king?" a: "They expressed unwavering faith, stating that their God could deliver them, but even if He did not, they would not worship the golden image." - q: "What happened in the fiery furnace?" a: "The three men were unharmed, and a fourth figure, resembling the Son of God, was seen with them." - q: "What does this sermon teach about trials?" a: "It emphasizes that God is present with His people in their trials and that suffering can lead to spiritual freedom." quotes: - "Thou art this head of gold." - "If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace." - "When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee." applicationPoints: - "We must remain steadfast in our faith, even when faced with societal pressures to conform." - "True worship is not reliant on external rituals or music but is a matter of the heart." - "In times of trial, we can trust that God is with us, providing strength and deliverance." keywords: - "idolatry" - "faith" - "persecution" - "deliverance" - "Antichrist" - "worship" - "trials" - "God's presence" ---

Nebuchadnezzar had heard from Daniel's lips, "Thou art this head of gold." The poor king became puffed up and in the pride of his heart attempted to unify the religious worship of his vast empire. He had an immense statue of gold made, the image of a man, no doubt, and he set it up in the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. It was idolatry and the deification of man. Idolatry and the deification of man are then the first moral characteristics mentioned which are to prevail during the times of the Gentiles. The times of the Gentiles produce a religion, which is opposed to the God of heaven. The image was sixty cubits high and six broad. Seven is the divine number and "six" is the number of man. Sixty cubits and six reminds us of that familiar passage in the Book of Revelation, where we have the number of a man given, that mysterious number "Six hundred three score and six," that is 666. The image then represents man, but the climax of man was not yet reached. However, the beginning foreshadows the end of the times of the Gentiles. That end is described in the xiii chapter of Revelation. This chapter leads us upon the ground of the restored Roman Empire, when the ten kingdoms are established. Then a great Roman emperor, of whom we hear later as the little horn in Daniel's vision, will appear and will make a covenant with the Jews, which permits them to resume their worship. He will break that covenant. Another beast, the second beast in Revel, xiii, the personal Antichrist, equally energized by Satan like the head of the restored Roman Empire, will put up an image, the image of the beast and demand its worship. Then the idolatry and deification of man has reached its full height. The Antichrist and the image will be worshipped; he will sit in the temple of God and show that he is god. We see from this brief review how the act of Nebuchadnezzar clearly points to the time of the end.

The civil power tried to force this universal religion upon the people. The great governors, judges, captains, and rulers had to appear for the dedication of the image. But then the whole thing had a religious aspect. Listen, after looking at this great awe-inspiring image of gold -- to the sweetest music. The cornet, the flute, the harp, the sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music sounds forth. No doubt the Chaldean priests approached chanting some sweet Babylonian song. Why all this? To stir up the religious emotions and aid in this way the worship of an idol. It is intensely interesting that the ancient Babylonian worship, with its ceremonials and chanting is reproduced in Rome, which is called in Revelation, Babylon.¹

And do we not find here lessons likewise for our day? We hear from many sides the cries for a new religion, for a universal religion. It will surely come; yea, it is almost upon us. The age will not run out

irreligiously. The false worship, the Cain-cult is all about us. It is the bloodless religion, the religion which exalts man. And there you may even now go and hear the sweetest music, the finest operatic airs from well trained singers, often taken from the playhouses of the world. And the magnificent ceremonies and rituals -- all great helps to worship -- yes, but what kind of worship? A sensuous, soulical worship, but not the worship in Spirit and in truth. The true worship in the Spirit does not need the sweet music of the world.

The Faithful Three. The proclamation had been made and when the sweet music was heard all nations and languages fell down and worshipped. And whosoever did not follow the King's demand was to be cast into a fiery furnace. Then came the Chaldeans and accused the three friends of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

Then Nebuchadnezzar in his rage and fury commanded to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Then they brought these men before the King. Nebuchadnezzar spake and said unto them. Is it true O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego do not ye serve my gods nor worship the golden image which I have set up? Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands? Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, answered and said to the King, O, Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up (verses 13-18).

Nebuchadnezzar finds out that the accusation is true. Here are three men who refuse to worship the image of gold. And Nebuchadnezzar, whom we saw bowing before Daniel and acknowledging God, the Lord of Kings and the Revealer of secrets, can say now in an arrogant way " Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?" But in that dark hour the Grace and Strength of God covered the three friends of Daniel. What gracious words they were permitted to speak! No exciting note nor any fear whatever can be discovered in their answer to the King. They breathe calmness and determination. They were men of faith, and faith is seen here in its perfection. They know that the God whom they serve is an omnipotent God; He is able to deliver them. And then they add " and He WILL deliver us out of thy hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee that we will not serve thy gods." What victorious language this was! The raging King stood helpless in the presence of these men, with their holy separation and determination, born of faith.

The furnace is heated seven times more, the most mighty men are commissioned to cast the three into the furnace heat. The very men who cast them down were consumed by the flames. But when the King looked towards the furnace he beheld to his great astonishment not three men bound and burning up, but four men loose and actually walking in the fire. " They have no hurt and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." And when they were brought up from the fiery furnace, no smell of fire was about them, not even a hair was singed, only the bands which had bound them were burned off. The fire had set them free but it could not touch them. But did the King speak true when he beheld the fourth like the Son of God? Little did he know what he said or what it meant, but assuredly he saw in that fire the Son of God, Jehovah, for He had promised His people, " When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle on thee." The faithful Lord kept His promise to His trusting servants.

And has not all this been repeated throughout the times of the Gentiles especially during the Roman Empire? Pagan Rome persecuted the true worshippers of God and in great persecutions, multitudes suffered martyrdom. But think of what is worse, papal Rome, that Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots. There we find the images and the sweet music, the prostrations and political power enforcing unity of worship. The fiery furnaces are there, the stake, the most awful tortures for those who were faithful to God and to their Lord. Think of the story of the Waldensians and Huguenots. And while for these noble martyrs, for whom there is a martyr's crown in the coming day of Christ, there came no deliverance and their bodies were consumed by the fire, yet the Son of God was with them and with praising hearts and a song upon their dying lips, He carried them through the fire. It is interesting to read in expositions of Daniel and the Book of Revelation, written in the 16th and 17th centuries, how the expositors saw in papal Rome the Antichrist. But a great fulfillment of all this is yet to come under the domineering little horn, the beast out of the sea.

The Remnant of the Time of the End. When Antichrist terrorizes Jerusalem and the image is set up we read that all who do not worship the image of the beast shall be killed. And in that time of fiery trial, the great tribulation, there will be a faithful Jewish remnant. They will refuse to worship the image and many of them will suffer martyrdom while others will be miraculously kept by the Lord's mighty power and pass through the great tribulation without being harmed by it.

The blessed application in connection with our trials, the furnace experiences of God's people, we cannot enter into now. But blessed be God, whatever the trial may be, whatever the fiery heat. One is always there with His believing trusting children, our blessed Lord, the Son of God. In all our trials and sorrows the Son of God is with us. And the fire but burns off our bands and sets us free. Once more the king, acknowledged the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

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