

China's Confession -- Episode 2

by Zhiming Yuan

The sermon explores the historical pattern of power struggle in China, the consequences of sinful leadership, and the hope for change through righteous leadership and godly living.

Scripture: Genesis 3:4, Genesis 4:8, Psalm 146:3, Proverbs 16:18, Ecclesiastes 1:9, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23

Topics: "Sinful Nature", "Godless Rebellion"

Description

Zhiming Yuan reflects on the history of China, tracing the downfall of mankind from the loss of godliness and the deception by the great dragon to the rise and fall of emperors who claimed divinity, leading to cycles of devastation, violence, and rebellion. The sermon highlights the tragic consequences of sinful man trying to be holy and godless individuals considering themselves as gods, resulting in power struggles, oppression, bloodshed, and treachery throughout Chinese history.

Transcript

B1) Commenting on the changing political and cultural landscape of his time, Confucius concluded, "The Tao has vanished!"

B2) China has endured repeated cycles of devastation for 2500 years, its people never associating this nightmare with their loss of godliness. Today's increasingly materialistic Chinese are too busy and self-absorbed to see the true state of their nation--that its constant turmoil may be connected to the original fall of mankind.

B3) The Tao was gone and mankind fell from grace. How did this happen? Perhaps the answer is in the most ancient of human traditions.

B4) The serpent, or great dragon, said to Eve, "Ignore God's warning. If you eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, you shall be like God, knowing good from evil." Eve ate and gave some to her husband to eat. Thus humankind, deceived by the dragon, rebelled against God.

B5) After man rebelled against God, the first recorded incident was Cain's murder of his brother Abel.

B6) The ancient Chinese also blamed the great dragon for destroying their original God fearing culture.

B7) Through 'successions by virtue' Emperor Yu handed over control of the land to Bo Yi. However the people rejected

Bo Yi in favor of Yu's son Qi.

B8) Legend has it Qi rode a pair of dragons to heaven three times to steal nine divine songs. He later had the songs performed for his own amusement on a plateau.

B9) With assistance from the dragons, humanism, nepotism, and blasphemy entered into the Land of God.

B25) When Wu Zixu's enemy died before he could have the satisfaction of revenge, Wu excavated the man's tomb and whipped his corpse. For this, Wu Zixu is famous.

B26) Generations of Chinese have identified with "The Zhao Orphan"--the story of a lone son who survives the slaying of his family. Loyal Zhao supporters sacrificed all to protect this orphan so that he could grow up and avenge his family

B27) During this period, Chinese culture redefined revenge as an act of righteousness.

B28) [The Communists calls me to the revolution, Seize the whip, seize the whip Lash the enemies.]

B29) Morality became relative and immoral acts were committed in its name. Kindness was exploited for evil and innumerable lives sacrificed for the sake of territorial expansion.

B30) Abandoning the godly life, people became opportunists.

B31) Su Qin, a self-made political mastermind, presented a strategy to the King of Qin to conquer six neighboring states. When the king turned him down, he immediately convinced the six other kings to join forces to defeat the state of Qin. Su Qin was made prime minister of this new alliance and is remembered for his wisdom and flexibility. Chinese history never questioned his moral integrity!

B32) After three hundred years of devastation, seven powers emerged from the ashes of more than a hundred states.

B33) Two hundred more years of greater bloodshed and treachery, a sole victor survived: 'Qin Shi Huang', the first emperor of Qin.

B34) Exceedingly proud of his conquest, the Emperor consulted with his officials and wise men and "appropriately" renamed himself 'huang di,'--the 'emperor-god.'

B35) He said, "I am the first emperor-god! My descendents will continue ten-thousand generations without ceasing!"

B36) China's emperors continued to usurp the glory of God for the next 2000 years. Shen Zhou, the land of 'God,' fell from grace into rebellion and human degradation.

B37) It was the same deception the serpent, the great dragon, had perpetrated in the beginning-- that man could be God. China's emperor-gods believed they were heirs of the dragon and relentlessly enforced their "divinity" through violence and self-degradation. This tragedy continued from the Warring States era through China's dynasties.

B38) Sima Qian, court historian in 100 B.C., wrote the famous 'Shi Ji', the Historical Records. Because he was sympathetic when a Han general surrendered to the Huns, the emperor ordered his execution.

However, because of his desire to complete his book, Sima Qian accepted a dreadful and degrading alternative: castration.

B39) He continued writing, vividly describing historical events and people. However, in matters concerning the emperor, he was at a loss for words.

B40) He may have been afraid or simply confused.

B41) Two thousand years later, John King Fairbank, a prominent professor of Chinese studies at Harvard, was puzzled why Sima Qian gave up writing. He asked, "Why did Sima Qian never question the emperor's absolute power? Who gave him the right to castrate others? Why did the people have no recourse to protest the emperor's impulsive and irrational acts?"

B42) After devoting a lifetime to the study of China, Professor Fairbank wrote in his book, 'China: the New History'--"A Chinese emperor was 'God on earth' subsequently his "acts" were "acts of God." Westerners believe in eternal life, so they fear God. The Chinese are only concerned with the present life, so they fear the god who sits on the palace throne--the emperor."

B43) The tragedy was that the emperors were mere mortals--sinful fallen men who kept their thrones through force and cruelty.

B44) China went through cycles of division and unification, warring states and unified empires, violence and self-degradation.

B45) The first period: the Warring States era lasted 500 years, followed by the short-lived Qin Dynasty which transitioned into 400 years of unification under the Han Dynasty.

B46) The second period: The Wei, Jin, Southern and Northern Dynasties endured 400 years of warfare. The brief rule of the Sui Dynasty followed, before transitioning into the Tang Dynasty and its 300 years of sovereignty.

B47) The third period: The Ten States, Liao, Song, Xia, and Jin Dynasties added up to 400 years of brutality. The Yuan Dynasty followed, quickly absorbed into 300 years of Ming Dynasty dictatorship.

B48) The fourth period: The Manchus were dominated under the Qing Dynasty for 300 years until being invaded by Western Powers. The Republic of China briefly governed before the People Republic of China took control.

B49) Throughout the history of China, millions lives were sacrificed and families scattered in order for one man to dominate the land.

B50) Many Chinese folk heroes were praised for their strategic skill, courage and loyalty--their deeds immortalized in books and poems. However, under their virtuous veneers lay deceit, brutality, misguided devotion, and self-righteousness.

B51) For the next two and half millenniums, "unrighteous" wars decimated more than half the population of China. Several million people died as a result of the war between Nationalists and Communists. In the end, who triumphed? Socialism or capitalism? Karl Marx or Sun Yatsen?

B52) These were not righteous wars, but premeditated power struggles for the dominance of China. The new dynasties brought no fundamental changes, no return to piety.

B53) Because the dynasties were maintained by oppression and bloodshed, not virtue, the justice-starved people resorted to treachery and rebellion. The insecure rulers responded with greater oppression, perpetuating the vicious cycle.

B54) When Liu Bang founded the Han Dynasty, he rewarded his supporters by making them lords, but soon afterward had them all executed and replaced by his sons. Li Shi-min murdered his two brothers to secure the Tang Dynasty throne. Ming Dynasty founder, Zhu Yuanzhang dismissed his prime minister and killed his former supporters. Hundreds of thousands of people perished during his reign. Song Dynasty founder, Zhao Kuangyin forced all the top-rank generals to resign in just one day.

B55) Zhao's army suffered repeated defeat by the Huns eventually paying them a huge tribute to settle. This was the price he paid for his insecurities.

B56) China's pattern of power struggle continues to this day. After founding the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong purged most of his faithful comrades who had helped him establish the new government.

B57) This is the result when sinful man pretends to be the holy, when the godless regard themselves as gods.

B58) Interspersed within the cycles of devastation were periods of peace, usually during the rule of the second or third generations. However, greater bloodshed and devastation would resume in the fourth or fifth generations.

B59) The Han, Tang, Ming, and Qing Dynasties were no exception. Cycles of massacres and violence followed short periods of peace and prosperity. Huge portions of the population were killed.

B60) Today, second- and third-generation leaders--Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin have opened the Mainland China market, ushering in an era of prosperity. However, will the fourth- and fifth-generation leadership repeat the tragic historical pattern--or will they break the cycle and bring about successful reform?

B61) There were reformers in China. But none fared well.

B62) There were righteous people in China. But all came to tragic ends.

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