

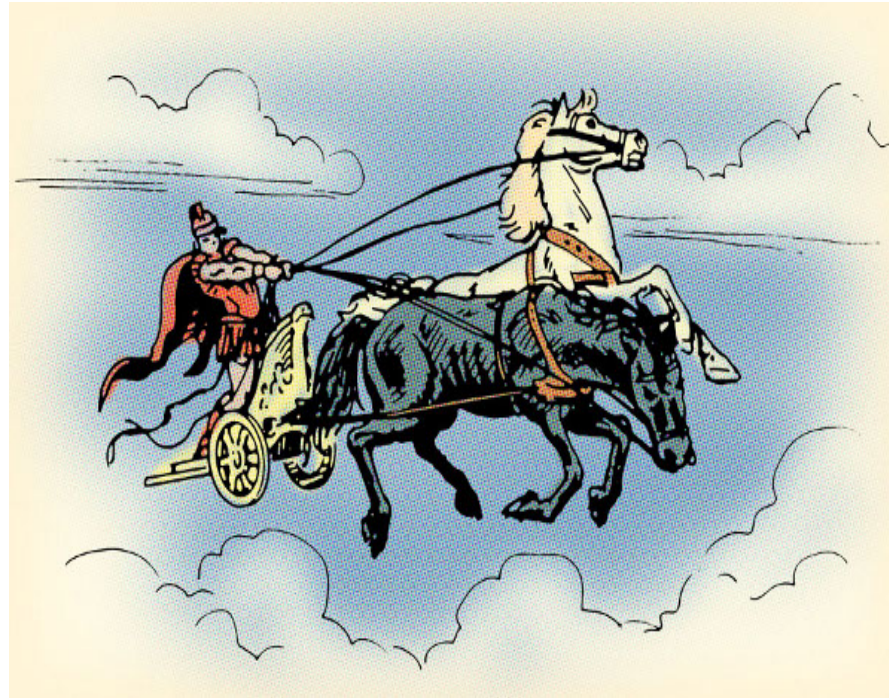
# The Foundations of Puritanism

## Understanding the Protestant Reform

# Foundations of Christian theology

- Christian theology was influenced by Greek philosophy, in particular Plato's views
- Plato: The soul consists of three basic energies: **Reason, emotion** and the **appetites**:
- The chariot allegory

# The chariot analogy



- St. Paul → St. Augustin

Adam and Eve break the rules (Book of Genesis). Man's loss of authority over his inferiors: over his passions and over his physical organism

- After the Fall **Understanding** ceased to rule and the **Will** did not listen to Understanding, both being subjected to **Appetite**. This is the Human Condition

- There is one safe island in the raging ocean of the **Fallen World: the Church** (Catholic and Apostolic)
- The individual Christian obtains access to the saving powers of Jesus through **confession, prayer** and the **Sacraments** (holy communion)
- **Extra ecclesiam nulla salus** (outside the Church there is no salvation)

# Catholic abuses in Medieval and Renaissance times

- Mass becomes an empty ritual, performed by illiterate and immoral priests
- A worldly church perceived to be more preoccupied with its own power than with salvation
- The catholic faith deteriorates into superstition (indulgences, relics...)

# The beginning of the Reformation

- A German monk and professor of theology, Martin Luther, confronted the idea that salvation could be purchased with money
- Nailed his **Ninety-Five thesis** to the door of Saints' Church in Wittenberg in 1517, sparking the Reformation
- Refusal to retract resulted in his excommunication by Pope Leo X

# Luther's three *Solae*

The three *solae* summarize the basic theological beliefs of the Protestant Reformation

(St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 1: 16-17; 3, 20-24)



- **Sola Scripture** ('by Scripture alone'): The Bible as the only source for Christian doctrine → It should be accessible to all
- **Sola Fides** ('by faith alone')
- **Sola Gratia** ('by God's grace alone')

- In the Protestant Reformation...
- The **Bible** replaces the **Church** as the necessary **link** between the individual and the Grace of God
- **Scripture** is the basis of **faith** and faith the prerequisite and the guarantee of God's **grace**
- **Printing** and **translations** into the **vernacular** makes the Bible accessible to all who can read
- The **pulpit** replaces the altar in the Reformation



# Calvin (1509-1564)

- Principal figure in the development of Calvinism
- Advocated the **Doctrine of Predestination:**
- A) All events have been willed by God
- B) God's foreknows who will be saved (the elect) and who will be dammed.
- Preached in Geneva





# The Puritans: Why were they dissatisfied with the Church of England?

- The Church of James I did not reform enough
- Their form of worship, which retained elements from the Catholic mass, was seen as incompatible with the spirit of the Reformation
- Royal attempts to impose liturgical uniformity to all subjects leads to confrontation with the Puritans (What is to be at the centre of the church, the pulpit or the communion table?)





# The Puritans

- God is angry with England for its tolerance of **idolatry** (worship of physical objects)
- God punishes **national sins** with **national punishment**
- A group of Puritans fled to America to found a new society based on the Bible.
- They established a new **covenant** with God

# The Puritan Mind

- Puritans see the **world** as a **wilderness** and the **church of the elect** as a **garden** in the middle of a wilderness of sin
- The garden needs a **hedge** around it (discipline)
- The **devil** is ready to enter any hole made in the edge by sinful behavior → The wilderness always threatens to invade the garden

- **Sin** must be rigorously suppressed
- The godly (the elect) suppress their own sins through **inner discipline** and by **outward force**