

and this was in keeping with the newer emphasis in the Augustinian order. Luther was ordained a priest in 1507 and quickly rose in the monastic line...due to his own commitment and searching for truth and natural diligence to duty. By 1515 Luther was the district Augustinian vicar (as well as a professor in the university) and was the chief preacher of the order...visiting and preaching regularly in the several monasteries. While Luther would later see the monastic life as unnatural and not to be preferred, he gave himself totally to it while there and distinguished his order with service. And, when he came to the open announcements of his doctrines, he had an audience that had already been blessed and instructed by his teaching. This ready corps of followers gave Luther a great advantage in the spiritual war that was to come.

A few key events in his transition

The life of Luther is fascinating and I will mention some of the better lives I have read. Of the many details that will interest us only the following are mentioned.

--1510, the journey to Rome. Luther went to Rome with eagerness to see how the great spiritual city of the world was based. He was enormously discouraged first with the life of the monasteries he saw in Italy and second with the condition of life in Rome itself. But his mission (not exactly clear to us today) called for completion and as a spiritual person he made the necessary pilgrimage to St. Peter's where he ascended the stairs praying on his knees. Probably the exact events are too apocryphal to note in this limited syllabus but somewhere between the top and the bottom it became clear to him that justification was not by doing and Luther began to move away from a works salvation. His actual understanding of conversion would come later when, in a famous incident better described than written about, he would suddenly see that man could only know and live for God by "faith alone." His conversion experience, as we would say, grew over the years to completion.

--The lectureship at Wittenberg, after 1512, allowed him time to study what was really going on in the academic life of the church. He intensified his Bible study and began making more direct application of it to the lives of his students. He saw the