From the moment the pope's excommunication of Luther arrived in Germany to be added to the ban of the emperor, Luther would spend the rest of his life under the double ban. To protect him from his enemies and to keep him from further arousing them by public utterances, Frederick the Wise decided to hide him. He instructed his court officials to devise a plan without divulging details, even to the Elector himself so that he could feign innocence. His chaplain, Spalatin, could be informed. Luther and one travelling companion, Armsdorff, were informed their last night in Worms. Luther was not happy with the plan but had to accept the judgment of his prince.

Luther's party planned to leave Worms in their wagon about 10 A.M. on the morning of April 26, 1521. The Imperial herald who was to carry out the guarantee of safe conduct delayed the departure for several hours to play down its importance; he, himself, departed later, joining the party at Oppenheim that evening. The next day they reached Frankfort. After another day's journey, at Friedberg, the herald was dismissed with letters from Luther to the emperor and to the princes at the Diet explaining why he could not recant. At Hersfeld he was warmly greeted by the Benedictines and formally received by the magistrates. The next morning (May 2) he preached. He reached Eisenach that night. Before leaving he yielded to popular demand and preached, despite the protest of the local priest. In the Thuringian forest he visited his grandmother and an uncle and other relatives. He preached at Höhra, his ancestral home.

In the depths of the forest a troop of armed horsemen suddenly appeared and carried off Luther with much cursing and show of force. They put Luther on a horse and for a whole day led him by circuitous roads through the forest. At about eleven o'clock that night they arrived at the gates of the castle of Wartburg where Luther was to be a prisoner. Hana von Berlesch, the lord of the Wartburg and Burchard von Hundt of Altenstein castle were the leaders in carrying out the scheme.

The news of Luther's disappearance quickly spread to all Germany. His followers almost universally believed that his enemies had done away with him. Indignation was so great Alexander feared for his life. He soon suspected that the Saxon fox, Frederick, had concealed him.

In the Wartburg Luther was instructed to let his hair and beard grow. He was to dress and pose as Junker George (Duke or Sir George) on a hunting trip. He wore a sword at his side. His identity was known only to his host and hostess. He went on hunting trips into the forest but he had little taste for hunting. He could accept hunting boars, bears, wolves and foxes, but his soul revolted at the hounds chasing the harmless rabbit. He compared it to the way the devil and the pope were treating him.

The stay in the Wartburg was a trying time for Luther. The loneliness, the lack of public activity, the enforced idleness, the sense of isolation from the fight for reform deeply troubled his soul. The rich food and sedentary life added to his physical ills--especially his constipation. Laxatives sent by Spalatin in October gave him relief. He suffered from insomnia.

The Wartburg was old and filled with bats and owls. To Luther the noises of the night were pranks of the devil--the devil was throwing nuts at the ceiling and rolling barrels down the stairs.

At first Luther tried to make up his arrears in the canonical hours of prayer. As professor, preacher, director of monasteries, and reformer under attack he had been too busy to keep up with the canonical hours of prayer that were the duty of a monk. With much prayer and fasting he began to catch up only to be plagued with insomnia.
Luther turned to work. He called the Wartburg his Patmos and resolved he would not be idle. He studied the Bible in the original languages. He wrote an exposition of the sixty-eighth Psalm. He wrote a book on Confession. He prepared an exposition on the Magnificat. He wrote a controversial treatise against a Louvain theologian. He worked on his commentary on Psalms. He wrote sermons on the Gospels and Epistles in German. He translated into German Melanchthon's Latin reply to the University of Paris.

When Luther learned that the Archbishop of Mainz, Cardinal Albert, had published a new sale of indulgences that offered 39,540,120 years and 220 days respite from purgatory, Luther prepared his A Blast Against the Archbishop of Mainz and sent it to Spalatin for publication. Since the Archbishop was also one of the German Electors, Frederick forbade Spalatin to publish the blast. Since he was sheltering Luther he feared an attack by the emperor and the pope and did not want to lose the support of an Elector. Spalatin tried to keep Luther quiet on the matter but Luther was furious. He had not spared the pope and why should he fear the pope's creature? It would be better to let the world perish than to leave the Lord's sheep to the wolf. Luther wrote directly to the Archbishop. He must not think Luther dead. If the Archbishop did not reply in fourteen days he would publicly expose him. The Archbishop wrote a penitent letter, declaring himself a stinking sinner and declaring that the sale of indulgences had been cancelled. His chaplain, Capito, also wrote Luther a letter that Albert's sympathies were with the Reformation.

Word was out that Luther was not dead but his hiding place was still unknown. Luther prepared an elaborate treatise on Monastic Vows and in a long letter dedicated it to his father. He wanted his father to know that his opposition to Luther's becoming a monk was unjustified. The Lord had permitted him to disobey his father to learn by experience the evils of monasticism. The vows of a monk were not worth a straw. Obedience to a parent took precedence over monkish vows.

The call to the ministry was a divine call from Christ and must be obeyed.

Luther also prepared a book attacking private masses for the dead entitled, On the Abolition of Private Masses. Luther sent the manuscripts of this work to Spalatin for publication just as he had sent A Blast Against the Archbishop of Mainz and On Monastic Vows. Spalatin and Frederick withheld them from publication. Luther grew impatient.

THE COURSE OF THE REFORMATION IN WITTEMBERG:

Luther had left Melanchthon to carry on in Wittenberg but mild Melanchthon gave way to Carlstadt, the senior professor. Carlstadt, ably assisted by a fiery Augustinian monk, Gabriel Zwilling, was determined to follow the logic of Luther's position and to carry through a thorough going reform. They moved from the theory of reform to actual practice that more directly touched the lives of the common people. Everything not commanded in Scripture must go.

Carlstadt prepared a work on celibacy. God had ordained marriage. The priest not only might marry but must marry. He called on priests, monks and nuns to marry. He set the example by marrying a girl of fifteen years of age. He sent an announcement of his marriage to the Elector. Luther was pleased when he learned of Carlstadt's marriage but was disturbed when he received news of the fiery preaching of Gabriel Zwilling urging monks and nuns to marry. On November 30 fifteen monks withdrew from the Augustinian monastery and married. Melanchthon was disturbed and wrote Luther for advice. This led Luther to make intensive study of monasticism and the vows of the monks.

Carlstadt undertook reform of the worship. He declared an end to clerical dress and preached from the pulpit in plain clothes. He declared an end to confession as preparation for communion. The only preparation was faith. He spoke the words of institution in German instead of in Latin. He invited the congregation to join in singing. He invited the people to take both bread and wine. He allowed the people to take the bread into their own hands. He declared an end to fasting. Melanchthon on September 29 administered communion in both kinds to a few students in the parish church. Carlstadt ordered it for the whole congregation.
Zwilling called for an end to the mass. Masses ceased in the Augustinian Cloister on October 23. On November 1 which was All Saints' Day when relics were displayed in the Castle Church, Justus Jonas branded indulgences as rubbish and called for an end to all vigils and private masses. No masses would be said for those absent. Frederick was so disturbed that he appointed a commission to inform him on the teaching of Scripture. The commission could not agree. The university, the Augustinians, and the Castle Church were all filled with disagreement and students and townspeople intimidation the old believers. Frederick declared that if masses ceased endowments and salaries would cease. Above all he pleaded that there be no violence or tumult.

Luther was so disturbed by the reports coming out of Wittenberg and the fact that his books had not been published, that on the fourth of December, 1521, he slipped back into Wittenberg in disguise to investigate conditions. The day before his arrival there had been a riot. Students and townsfolk with knives under their cloaks had invaded the parish church. They removed the mass books, drove out the priests, and threw stones at those saying prayers to the Virgin Mary. Luther spent several days in the home of Armadorf, not daring to visit the university. Cranach painted his picture in the garb of the knight. Luther held conferences with trusted friends. The university was prospering with students coming from all over Europe. Justus Jonas had changed from the law faculty to theology. Aurogallus had become Professor of Hebrew. John Bugenhagen had joined the faculty of theology. He was an authority on the church and its organization. Melanchthon was hard at work on the first Lutheran systematic theology, his Locci Communes, the cardinal points of theology. Zwilling was ignoring all appeals from Frederick for moderation. Luther was favorable to the marriage of the priests, the end of monasteries, the cessation of masses for the dead, and the communion in both kinds. He deplored the violence. His friends begged him to translate the Bible into German.

LUTHER'S RETURN TO THE WARTBURG:

On his return to the Wartburg Luther prepared his Admonition to all Christians to Abstain from Riot and Sedition. Violence dishonored God and showed a lack of faith in God's own means of overthrowing evil. Violence raised prejudice against the Gospel. Riot and sedition spring from the devil. Christ would overthrow evil by preaching. Men should not call themselves Lutherans; they should be Christians. Luther wrote, "What am I, a miserable mass of corruption, that the children of Christ should be called by my name!"

Luther began work translating the New Testament from the second edition of Erasmus' Greek Testament (Basel, 1518). Fourteen German translations had already been published but they were lacking in scholarship and had been made from the corrupt Latin text. In three months Luther put the New Testament into idiomatic German. It was one of Luther's greatest achievements. It did more than any other force to shape the German language.

Luther received many pleas to return to Wittenberg. He pleaded with Frederick to allow him to return but Frederick refused, fearing for his safety. Luther was deeply troubled in conscience. Was he cowardly in hiding? Was he a deserter? Was it all a temptation of the devil? One day he threw the ink well at the devil and splattered the wall. Luther continued to work on his sermons.

TURMOIL IN WITTENBERG:

On December 19, 1521 Frederick issued an order that there would be no changes in the mass until agreement was reached. Carlstadt decided to defy the Elector. He announced that on New Year's he would give communion in both kinds to the whole town. The Elector forbade him to preach on New Year's. Carlstadt traded with the preacher for Christmas Day. There was rioting on Christmas Eve. The mob invaded the parish church, smashing lamps, driving out the priests, and singing riotous secular tunes. They invaded the Castle Church called for pestilence and hell-fire on the priest.

On Christmas Day 2,000 people gathered in the Castle Church. Carlstadt preached in a plain black robe without the vestments. In the sermon he told the people they did not need fasting and confession as a preparation for communion.
If they felt they needed absolving they lacked faith in the sacrament. He said an abbreviated Mass omitting all suggestions that it was a sacrifice. When he came to the passages on the bread and wine he gave them in German. Then he gave the people both bread and wine.

Carlstadt led the town council of Wittenberg in publishing a city ordinance calling for Reformation. The Mass would be conducted as Carlstadt had done it. Luther's program of social reform was to be carried out: begging was forbidden, the poor were to be supported from a common fund, prostitution was banned. Also all images should be removed from the churches.

Carlstadt declared that the Ten Commandments forbade all images as idols. God is a spirit; images of gold, silver and wood are physical and remind of the physical rather than the spiritual. He went on to attack instruments of music as belonging to the theatre rather than in the church.

Zwilling took up Carlstadt's ideas and with fiery preaching aroused the people to form mobs that invaded the churches, smashing images, throwing manure on the statues of the Virgin, destroying the altars, pictures of saints and stained glass windows.

In Zwickau Thomas Muenzer had become even more radical. He had begun to attack the authority of Scripture, claiming new revelations from God. He bitterly attacked infant baptism. On December 27, 1521 three of his followers came to Wittenberg. Two were cloth weavers; Nicholas Storch was the leader. A third man was Thomas Stuebner, a former student at Wittenberg. They denounced a book of religion and preached continuing revelation. The end of the world was near. They attacked infant baptism.

Amsdorf and Melanchthon could not handle them and appealed to Frederick to send for Luther. Frederick and Luther did not consider the problem so serious and Luther sent a mild rebuke to Melanchthon for his timidity. He should try the spirits. He should not be taken in by smooth words. Luther declared infants have faith even if they cannot express it. No heretic had ever denied infant baptism. Whatever is not against Scripture is for it, and Scripture is for it.

More trouble fell on Frederick, Duke George gave the Diet at Nuremberg a report on affairs in Wittenberg. The Diet sent a letter denouncing the changes in Wittenberg both to Frederick and to the Bishop of Meissen who had jurisdiction over Wittenberg. Frederick called a halt to the changes, ordered Carlstadt not to preach again, and abrogated the city ordinance for reform. Carlstadt submitted but Zwilling left Wittenberg.

LUTHER RETURNS TO WITTENBERG:

The town council of Wittenberg sent an urgent invitation to Luther to return to restore order. Luther had already made up his mind to return by Easter. He had begun work on the translation of the Old Testament and felt the need of the help of his colleagues at Wittenberg who were better versed in Hebrew. Luther sent a letter to Frederick that he was returning to Wittenberg. A year of hiding was enough. Luther declared that Frederick needed Luther more than Luther needed Frederick. God would protect him.

Luther knew Frederick could not protect him should the diet or the emperor decide to extradite him. Sickingen had been crushed by the Archbishop of Trier in alliance with princes that Sickingen had raided. Hutten had fled to Switzerland ill with syphilis.

Luther made his way back to Wittenberg dressed as a knight with sword at his side. He stopped in Jena at the Black Bear Inn. He sat at a table alone reading Hebrew. Two Swiss travellers on their way to Wittenberg mistook him for Hutten, amazed at his learning. The inn keeper suggested that it was Luther. Luther suggested he might be the devil, but told the strangers when they arrived in Wittenberg to tell Dr. Schurf of the law faculty they brought greetings from "one who is coming." When they arrived at Dr. Schurf's house they were amazed to find the knight was already there and really was Luther.

Luther had arrived in Wittenberg on Thursday, March 6, 1522. He visited with friends to learn the state of affairs. He prepared a report for Frederick to give to the Imperial Council explaining his return.
On Sunday, the first day of Lent, he began a series of eight sermons in the Parish Church. He called for an end to violence. No weapon should be used except the teaching of Scripture. They should show patience and gentleness to the weak. It had taken Luther three years of diligent study to come to the idea of reform. They should not expect the common people to understand it all in three months. Luther declared that what he had accomplished had come through prayer and preaching the Word. He set forth the doctrine that anything that was not expressly condemned and forbidden by the Word was to be allowed.

Zwilling who had returned agreed to stop celebrating the Lord's Supper with feathers in his beret. Luther recommended him to a pastorate at Zwickau. Carlsstadt was imbittered and disgraced. He left for a pastorate in Orlamuende. Capito, chaplain of the Archbishop of Mainz, after hearing two of the sermons joined the Reformation. Luther gave the Zwickau prophets such a rebuke that they fled.

Luther had turned the Reformation into more moderate channels. To Frederick and the princes he had become the hero of reason and order, and moderate reform. He allowed the statues and pictures, infant baptism and a modified Mass. The instrumental music continued.

Carlsstadt and Zwilling denounced Luther as a half-way reformer who still had one foot in Rome. Carlsstadt denounced education, put off the doctor's gown and dressed as a peasant. He declared that Dr. Luther was no better than Dr. Eck. The humblest peasant with a Bible in his hand was equal to either Dr. Eck or Dr. Luther. He called on humble peasants to give the answer to the theological problems of the day.

The Zwickau prophets became even more fanatical in preaching the end of the world. The pope and Luther both represented the Antichrist and God would use the Turks to punish them.

Luther had lost some of the most serious and zealous of the reforming spirits. Many of these would join in the Peasants' Revolt and the Left-wing or Anabaptist movements that were springing up.