



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

By: James C. Hill, Jr.

Dr. Sandra Tyler
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Great philosophers and theologians come in a variety of personalities. Aristotle, Socrates, and Plato are all well-known and distinct. What about Thomas Aquinas? He was born to royalty in 1225; originally named Tommaso d' Aquino. His birth took place in Southern Italy at his family's castle located in Rocca Secca. Thomas was one of his parents' (Theodora Rossi and Landulf of Aquino) five children. It may have come to the surprise of his family to find that they had a future titled saint in their lineage. That was young Tommaso's fate. Tommaso d' Aquino would eventually become St. Thomas Aquinas.

His family dates back to the 9th century, and they carried special title from the 10th century until the 12th. One of St. Thomas' ancestors was Abbot of Monte casino, which is between Rome and Naples. Thomas' father soldiered for Emperor Fredrick II. Thomas' father, Landalf, was a knight.

Thomas' family change their allegiances around the year 1244, due to the excommunications of Fredrick II by the pope. Thomas studied at the University of Paris between the years 1245-1248. He was attending what was then known as the Theological Center of Europe, and serving as an assistant under Albert the Great. Albert the Great was a Dominican who held the chair of Theology at the University of Paris in 1248. In 1251, John the Teuton, the Master of Order, was given the recommendation of young Thomas Aquinas as a potential teacher for the university. In 1252, St. Thomas Aquinas received the position and received a Bachelor of Sentences for the Commentary of Peter Lombard.

Thomas Aquinas collaborated with several philosophers, such as Aristotle (referred by Thomas as *The Philosopher*). Aristotle up to this point was largely

inaccessible to the west. Plato, a great philosopher, was not as readily received by Aquinas. Plato's great notoriety was a big hindrance to Aquinas' acceptance of him.

Thomas Aquinas dismissed his nobility and prestige for the acceptance of the gospel. Aquinas presented intelligent philosophies on theology. Intelligence in the Middle Ages was always met with so-called "intelligent opposition". Thomas Aquinas reached out to many who had opposing views with some success, and quite a few more objections.