

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – June 5, 2009

"You unlock this door with the key of imagination. Beyond it is another dimension...a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. You're moving into a land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas..." Those familiar words of Rod Serling introduced the television series, "The Twilight Zone." In today's Templates of Truth, we learn about another dimension.

The Book of Acts gives us the dramatic account of Paul's conversion experience on the Damascus Road, and the miraculous things that happened in his life in the days immediately following. Then, Paul disappears from the pages of Scripture and we hear nothing more about him for several years. Where was Paul, and what was he doing? He gives us some insight into these silent years in his letter to the church at Galatia: *I went away to Arabia and returned once more to Damascus (for) three years* (Galatians 1:17-18). There is no indication that Paul was doing any preaching or teaching during this period of time. History reveals no significant accomplishments of Paul's life from these years. It seems he just went away into hiding.

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul is vigorously defending the Gospel, which had been seriously distorted by the Judaizers. Their arguments were apparently very convincing, for Paul stated, *I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel* (1:6). As part of his defense, Paul needed to establish his own credentials in an effort to prove the sincerity of his message and the authenticity of the Gospel he had so faithfully preached to them. This Gospel, he said, did not come to him *from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through revelation of Jesus Christ* (1:12). While no one can know for certain, it is a very safe assumption that much of this revelation came to Paul during those three years while he was isolated in Arabia.

Particularly in our zeal to serve the Lord and perform the work of His kingdom, we like things to be happening all of the time. It is a tremendous blessing to see the activity of God working in the lives of people all around us. We love to be used of God and experience Him working in and through us to accomplish significant things. But there are times when all of that comes to a screeching halt! What happened? Why is God not moving any longer? Why does it seem He has just dropped me from His roster of resources? I feel lonely, forgotten, useless and rejected. Why?

I call these periods the "Silent Zone." The phone doesn't ring. There are no invitations to sing or preach. I am being passed over, sometimes even replaced for ministry opportunities. My name doesn't even come up for consideration. It is like I am forgotten or branded with a mark – STAY CLEAR OF HIM! While it is easy to feel abandoned and rejected during these times, I have come to discover that these were the most productive periods of my life. These were the times that God was preparing me for a deeper walk and a greater service. In order to do that, He had to isolate me away from every distraction and limit my activity so that I could better focus on what He needed to teach me in order to get me ready for the next level.

I use the term “silent” because that is what it seems like when we find ourselves in the Silent Zone. That is a dichotomy, however, for it is anything but silent. If you will listen, you will discover that these periods are teeming with *revelation*. God is speaking loud and clear because there is something significant He wants teach you that will greatly equip you for the work He has waiting for you just ahead. He wants to get you still and quiet, and may even allow these times to include career, financial, health and other situational impediments in order to restrict your activity and focus. The Silent Zone is much like a wilderness. It is dry and barren in a wilderness, leaving you hungry and thirsty. You will discover a deep hunger and thirst for God’s Word while enduring the Silent Zone. All *revelation* comes to us through the Word of God. It is a living and active Word, and from it we gain knowledge, insight, wisdom, power and strength. From it we learn the will, plan and purpose of God for our lives. Through it, God speaks personally and specifically to us, revealing His deep thoughts and mysteries. Such understanding and enlightenment cannot come *from men, nor through the agency of man, but (only) through (the revelation) of Jesus Christ* (1:1).

Are you in the Silent Zone today? Shake off your feelings of rejection and loneliness, and position yourself for revelation. Use this time to get alone with God in His Word. Pray and seek God in an intense way. Cherish the lack of opportunity and inactivity. Take advantage of the freedom from distraction. Discover what God is getting you ready for. How long will you be here? That is God’s call, not yours. Your job is to seek Him and trust Him with the process. Welcome to the Silent Zone.

That’s today’s Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.