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Lessons for February 2010

Lessons for February 7th, 2010 – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

First Lesson – Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]

1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. **2** Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. **3** And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory." **4** The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke. **5** And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" **6** Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. **7** The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: "Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out." **8** Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

[**9** And he said, "Go and say to this people: 'Keep listening, but do not comprehend; keep looking, but do not understand.' **10** Make the mind of this people dull, and stop their ears, and shut their eyes, so that they may not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears, and comprehend with their minds, and turn and be healed." **11** Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is utterly desolate; **12** until the LORD sends everyone far away, and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land. **13** Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.] (NRSV)

Psalm 138

- 1** I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;
- 2** I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your
steadfast love and your faithfulness;
for you have exalted your name and your word above everything.
- 3** On the day I called, you answered me,
you increased my strength of soul.
- 4** All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O LORD,
for they have heard the words of your mouth.
- 5** They shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
for great is the glory of the LORD.
- 6** For though the LORD is high, he regards the lowly;
but the haughty he perceives from far away.
- 7** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my
enemies;
you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me.
- 8** The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your
hands. (NRSV)

Second Lesson – 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

- 1** Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I
proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand, **2** through
which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed
to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. **3** For I handed on to you as of
first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in
accordance with the scriptures, **4** and that he was buried, and that he was raised on
the third day in accordance with the scriptures, **5** and that he appeared to Cephas,
then to the twelve. **6** Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers and
sisters at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have died. **7** Then he
appeared to James, then to all the apostles. **8** Last of all, as to one untimely born, he
appeared also to me. **9** For I am the least of the apostles, unfit to be called an
apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. **10** But by the grace of God I am
what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked
harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.
11 Whether then it was I or they, so we proclaim and so you have come to believe.
(NRSV)

The Gospel – Luke 5:1-11

1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, **2** he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. **3** He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. **4** When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "**Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.**" **5** Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." **6** When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. **7** So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. **8** But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" **9** For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; **10** and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "**Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.**" **11** When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. (NRSV)

Lessons for February 14th, 2010 – Transfiguration Sunday

First Lesson – Exodus 34:29-35

29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. **30** When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. **31** But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. **32** Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. **33** When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; **34** but whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, **35** the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him. (NRSV)

Psalm 99

- 1** The LORD is king; let the peoples tremble!
He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!
- 2** The LORD is great in Zion;
he is exalted over all the peoples.
- 3** Let them praise your great and awesome name.
Holy is he!
- 4** Mighty King, lover of justice, you have established equity;
you have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
- 5** Extol the LORD our God;
worship at his footstool. Holy is he!
- 6** Moses and Aaron were among his priests, Samuel also was among those who called on his name.
They cried to the LORD, and he answered them.
- 7** He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud;
they kept his decrees, and the statutes that he gave them.
- 8** O LORD our God, you answered them;
you were a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrongdoings.
- 9** Extol the LORD our God, and worship at his holy mountain;
for the LORD our God is holy. (NRSV)

Second Lesson – 2 Corinthians 3:12 – 4:2

12 Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness, **13** not like Moses, who put a veil over his face to keep the people of Israel from gazing at the end of the glory that was being set aside. **14** But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside. **15** Indeed, to this very day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their minds; **16** but when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. **1** Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. **2** We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. (NRSV)

The Gospel – Luke 9:28-36 [37-43]

28 Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. **29** And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. **30** Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him. **31** They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. **32** Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. **33** Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. **34** While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud. **35** Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" **36** When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

[**37** On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. **38** Just then a man from the crowd shouted, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son; he is my only child. **39** Suddenly a spirit seizes him, and all at once he shrieks. It convulses him until he foams at the mouth; it mauls him and will scarcely leave him. **40** I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." **41** Jesus answered, "**You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.**" **42** While he was coming,

the demon dashed him to the ground in convulsions. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And all were astounded at the greatness of God.] (NRSV)

Lessons for February 17th, 2010 – *Ash Wednesday*

First Lesson – Joel 2: 1-2, 12-17

1 Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble, for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near— **2** a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness! Like blackness spread upon the mountains a great and powerful army comes; their like has never been from of old, nor will be again after them in ages to come. **12** Yet even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; **13** rend your hearts and not your clothing. Return to the LORD, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing. **14** Who knows whether he will not turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him, a grain offering and a drink offering for the LORD, your God? **15** Blow the trumpet in Zion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; **16** gather the people. Sanctify the congregation; assemble the aged; gather the children, even infants at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room, and the bride her canopy. **17** Between the vestibule and the altar let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep. Let them say, "Spare your people, O LORD, and do not make your heritage a mockery, a byword among the nations. Why should it be said among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (NRSV)

or – Isaiah 58:1-12

1 Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. **2** Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God. **3** "Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?" Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. **4** Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. **5** Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? **6** Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? **7** Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? **8** Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, **10** if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. **11** The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. **12** Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. (NRSV)

Psalm 51:1-17

- 1** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.
- 2** Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.
- 3** For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
- 4** Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you are justified in your sentence and blameless when you pass
judgment.
- 5** Indeed, I was born guilty,
a sinner when my mother conceived me.
- 6** You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.
- 7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8** Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.
- 9** Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 10** Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
- 11** Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
- 12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.
- 13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.
- 14** Deliver me from bloodshed, O God, O God of my salvation,

and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.

15 O Lord, open my lips,

and my mouth will declare your praise.

16 For you have no delight in sacrifice;

if I were to give a burnt offering, you would not be pleased.

17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;

a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (NRSV)

Second Lesson – 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:10

20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. **1** As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain. **2** For he says, "At an acceptable time I have listened to you, and on a day of salvation I have helped you." See, now is the acceptable time; see, now is the day of salvation! **3** We are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, **4** but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, **5** beatings, imprisonments, riots, labors, sleepless nights, hunger; **6** by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, **7** truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; **8** in honor and dishonor, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; **9** as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; **10** as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything. (NRSV)

The Gospel – Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

1 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven. **2** "So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **3** But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **5** "And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **6** But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret

will reward you." **16** And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. **17** But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. **19** "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (NRSV)

Lessons for February 21, 2010 – First Sunday of Lent

First Lesson – Deuteronomy 26:1-11

1 When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, **2** you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. **3** You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." **4** When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, **5** you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. **6** When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, **7** we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. **8** The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; **9** and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. **10** So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. **11** Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house. (NRSV)

Psalm 91: 1-2, 9-16

1 You who live in the shelter of the Most High,
who abide in the shadow of the Almighty,
2 will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."
9 Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
the Most High your dwelling place,
10 no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.
11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways.
12 On their hands they will bear you up,
so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.

- 13** You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.
- 14** Those who love me, I will deliver;
I will protect those who know my name.
- 15** When they call to me, I will answer them;
I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them.
- 16** With long life I will satisfy them,
and show them my salvation. (NRSV)

Second Lesson – Romans 10:8b-13

8b "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); **9** because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. **11** The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." **12** For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. **13** For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (NRSV)

The Gospel – Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, **2** where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. **3** The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." **4** Jesus answered him, "**It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'**" **5** Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. **6** And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. **7** If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." **8** Jesus answered him, "**It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'**" **9** Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, **10** for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' **11** and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" **12** Jesus answered him, "**It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'**" **13** When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time. (NRSV)

Lessons for February 28th, 2010 – Second Sunday in Lent

First Lesson – Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18

1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, "Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great." **2** But Abram said, "O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" **3** And Abram said, "You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir." **4** But the word of the LORD came to him, "This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir." **5** He brought him outside and said, "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your descendants be." **6** And he believed the LORD; and the LORD reckoned it to him as righteousness. **7** Then he said to him, "I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess." **8** But he said, "O Lord God, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" **9** He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." **10** He brought him all these and cut them in two, laying each half over against the other; but he did not cut the birds in two. **11** And when birds of prey came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away. **12** As the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a deep and terrifying darkness descended upon him. **17** When the sun had gone down and it was dark, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. **18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. (NRSV)

Psalm 27

- 1** The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
- 2** When evildoers assail me to devour my flesh— my adversaries and foes—
they shall stumble and fall.
- 3** Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear;
though war rise up against me, yet I will be confident.
- 4** One thing I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple.
- 5** For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble;
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent; he will set me high on a rock.
- 6** Now my head is lifted up above my enemies all around me, and I will offer in his tent sacrifices with shouts of joy;

I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,

be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"

Your face, LORD, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me. Do not turn your servant away in anger, you who have been my help.

Do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God of my salvation!

10 If my father and mother forsake me,

the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,

and lead me on a level path because of my enemies.

12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries, for false witnesses have risen against me,

and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD

in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the LORD;

be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD! (NRSV)

Second Lesson – Philippians 3:17 – 4:1

17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the profit that accumulates to your account.

18 I have been paid in full and have more than enough; I am fully satisfied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God. **19** And my God will fully satisfy every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. **20** To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. **21** Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The friends who are with me greet you. **22** All the saints greet you, especially those of the emperor's household. **23** The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved. (NRSV)

The Gospel – Luke 13:31-35

31 At that very hour some Pharisees came and said to him, "Get away from here, for Herod wants to kill you." **32** He said to them, "Go and tell that fox for me,

'Listen, I am casting out demons and performing cures today and tomorrow, and on the third day I finish my work. **33** Yet today, tomorrow, and the next day I must be on my way, because it is impossible for a prophet to be killed outside of Jerusalem.' **34** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those

who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! **35** See, your house is left to you. And I tell you, you will not see me until the time comes when you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (NRSV)