*C&S – Come & See - Isaiah*

*NCBC – New Collegeville Commentary on Isaiah*

*NJBC – New Jerome Biblical Commentary*

*SN = Special Notes*

*NAB = New American Bible*

*SK = Chinese Bible*

*CCC = Catholic Catechism*

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| **A** | **Overview of Isaiah 63-66** * [Is 63:1-6] God appears as the avenging warrior who comes to confront evil and defend His people against wicked forces.
* [Is 63:7 – 64:11] The people plea for God’s deliverance in their sufferings.
* [Is 65:17-66:24] The promise of “new heavens and a new earth” where the meaning of true worship comes alive; the establishment of the New Jerusalem with a new nation of true converts.
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| **B** | **Content and Key Teachings – God is the Warrior of Vengeance*** “Who is this that comes from Edom, from Bozrah in garments stained crimson? Who is this so splendidly robed, marching in his great might?” – Edom (today’s Jordan), descendants of Esau, represents Judah’s worst enemies. Bozrah was the capital of Edom. These descendants of Esau raided and looted Judah after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C.. Loathing for Edom emerges throughout the prophets (Jer 49:17, Ezk 25:12-14, Joel 3:19, Malachi 1:4). These nations represent evil whom are against God and God’s Chosen People.
* At the end of time, God will trample evil in His wrath; “their lifeblood is sprinkled upon [His] garments, and [He has] stained all [His] clothing”. During the American Civil War, this reference was used to describe the bloodiness and desperation and the people’s hope for justice. During such times of evil and violence, justice was blinded by false mercy that didn’t distinguish right from wrong; as well, people only focused on happiness on earth but ignored true joy in the next life. The grapes from the vineyard are ripe and ready to be pressed for wine. Their fate is inevitable.
 | Is 63:1-6C&S p 195Num 24:17-18NCBC p 164Rev 19:13-15C&S p 195SN1 |
| **C** | **A Prayer for Deliverance*** [Is 63:7] “ I will recount the gracious deeds of the Lord, the praiseworthy acts of the Lord, because of all that the Lord has done for us”. The image of God has shifted from a vengeful God to a God “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Ex 34:6). The prophet appeals to God: remembering the great deeds He has done for Israel and extinguishing His anger.
* [Is 63:9] “It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them” – One of the many pieces of evidence supporting Jesus is God.
* [Is 64:8] “O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.” Israel is God’s firstborn and God is the Father. The imagery of clay and potter represents the relationship between humanity and God, exemplifying humility.
 | Is 63:7 – 64:11SN2, C&S p 198-99Jn 10:30, Ph 2:11,Is 7:14, 9:5, 59:16Ezek 34:11Ex 4:22Rm 9:20-21 |
| **D** | **God’s Response to the People’s Prayer*** [Is 65:1] “I was ready to be sought out by those who did not ask, to be found by those who did not seek me. I said, ‘Here I am, here I am’”. God relentlessly shows Himself to humanity but humanity often refuses His good will.
* [Is 65:8-10] “As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, ‘Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it’”. Due to the Israelites’ hardness of heart, God’s judgment is inevitable. Yet God is merciful, who will “bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah inheritors of my mountains” (65:9), so that those who seek Him will find pasture.
 | Is 65:1-16Gen 22:11ffPr 9:1ffNCBC p 169Deu 25:5 |
| **E** | **New Heavens and New Earth; A New Jerusalem with a New Nation of the Converted** * [Is 65:17] “For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind”. Jerusalem is the sign for a new world. John beautifully interprets the prophet’s vision from the perspectives of the Christians in Revelations: “And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Rev 21:2). At that time, “they shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain” (Is 65:25). “But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev 21:27).
* [Is 66:18] “I am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory”. The glory or “king of kings and lord of lords” (Rev 19:16).
 | Is 65:17 – 66:24Jn 21:1-8NCBC p 170 |

Special Notes:

1. The Battle Hymn of the Republic – Julia Ward Howe, 1862

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord:

He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored.

He hath loosed his fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword,

His truth is marching on.

Glory! Glory ! Hallelujah! Glory! Glory! Hallelujah

Glory! Glory ! Hallelujah! His truth is marching on

1. Mercy and Justice

The history of the concept of “mercy” is long and rich. Jesus addressed people who, as the people of God, had a special experience of God’s mercy. Examples:

* beginning of the history of the Judges (cf. Judg 3:7-9);
* Solomon’s prayer at the inauguration of the temple (1 Kgs 8:22-53);
* the renewal of the covenant after the exile (cf. Is 1:18);

Their certainty of God’s mercy was based on the Exodus experience, when God saw the affliction of God’s people and decided to deliver them (cf. Ex 3:7f). God triumphed over Israel’s infidelity of worshiping the golden calf, declaring He was “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love” (Ex 34:6).

Mercy characterizes the life of Israel; it is the content of its intimacy, the content of its dialogue with God.

In this way God’s mercy is contrasted with God’s justice, and mercy is shown to be not only the more powerful but also the more profound of the two.

Love conditions justice; justice serves love, a priority that is revealed precisely in mercy. Mercy differs from justice, but it is not in opposition to it.

(Adopted from JPII, *Mercy of God*, n.4 based on J. Donders’ *The Encyclicals in Everyday Language*, pp.24-26)