*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 44-50*** We continue to explore chapters 44 to 50, belonging to Second Isaiah (40-55)

  * Two key points: Chp 44 discusses the issue of idolatry and chps 49-50 explore the theme of “the Servant of the Lord”.
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| **B** | **Content and Key Teachings – God Reveals Himself Through History*** Is 44:1-28- – God blesses the Israelites, “I will pour my spirit upon your descendants, and my blessing on your offspring” (44:3). God is the one true God, therefore, the people should not worship idols. 44:4-5 => witnessing for God is the duty of the Church.
* How are worshiping God and idolatry described in Is 44 different?
* “Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you, you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me” (44:21). This beautiful message, rich in emotions, is also spoken to the Church.
* Is 44:1-25 – Cyrus is the “anointed” one, liberates the Israelites; a great miracle to reveal God’s salvific plan. “I arm you, though you do not know me” (44:4) => One may not be chosen because he/she is worthy of it. “Will you question me about my children, or command me concerning the work of my hands?” (44:11) => This demonstrates the short-sightedness of human vision. We should not doubt the breath and depth of God’s plan.
* Is 46:1-13 – About Idol-Worship: The Babylonian gods Baal and his son, Nebo “are on beasts and cattle” while humans are “borne” by God. “Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other” (46:9) => God builds relationships with humanity through history and traditions so that humanity may understand and trust Him.
* Is 47:1-15 – Babylon is only an instrument through which God punishes the Israelites, “they are like stubble, the fire consumes them” (47:14); they will be quickly destroyed. In Revelations, the author alludes to this to reveal the sins of Rome or Jerusalem, both will not escape their fate.
* Is 48:1-22 – The warning declared by the prophet before the exile demonstrates God’s fidelity to His own words. God, the Alpha and Omega, holds history in His hands. God’s might is fully revealed through the prophet’s message of Cyrus’ attack on Babylon and the return of the Jacob.
 | Is 44-48NCBC p 121, CCC 2113, 2130-2, Mt 4:8-10, Numbers 21:8-9, SN1Is 44:21-22NCBC p 124-5NCBC p 127NCBC 128 |
| **C** | **Revisiting the Servant of God*** Is 49:1-26 – “called me before I was born” and “made my mouth like a sharp sword”, God’s Servant must “bring Jacob back”, that salvation may reach the ends of the earth. God will restore the survivors of Israel and bring the captives home. God is Israel’s mother who will never forget her own son. The strength of Israel is beyond their imagination.
* Is 49:1 – “The Lord called me before I was born, while I was in my mother’s womb he named me”. “He is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (9:6). Other prophets who are called by God in the womb: Jeremiah (1:4), John the Baptist (Lk 1:13,15). In fact, we are all called and cared for by God when we are still in the womb.
* Is 49:2 – “He made my mouth a sharp sword” => God’s words.
* Is 49:6 – “I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth”. = > Salvation will reach the ends of the earth through the Church.
* Is 49:9-13 – We are all “captives” who are restored to God’s Kingdom through Christ. Through Christ’s salvation, our journey is filled with peace and joy.
* Is 49:21 – “Then you will say in your heart, ‘Who has borne me these? I was bereaved and barren, … where then have these come from?’” => This foretells that the strength of the Church will be comparable to a fecund mother.
* Is 50:4-11 – Songs of the Servant reveal that he must suffer and be put to shame but will be vindicated by God: “I gave my back to those who struck me, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I did not hide my face from insult and spitting. The Lord God helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame; he who vindicates me is near”.
 | Is 49-50 C&S p 157Heb 4:12, Rev 1:16, Eph 6:17NCBC p 133, Acts 13:47 |
| **D** | **Appreciation of Scripture*** Is 49:15 - Can a woman forget her nursing-child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.
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**SPECIAL NOTES**

1. “Christianity does not reject matter…God saw everything that he had made and it was very good (Genesis 1:31)….[Creation or Matter] is redeemed in the incarnation and becomes fully ‘theophoric’, i.e. capable of putting us in touch with the Father…The human body is a temple of the Spirit and is united with Jesus, who himself took a body for the world’s salvation…The Liturgy reveals that the body, through the mystery of the Cross, is in the process of transfiguration, pneumatization [Jesus’ transfiguration]” (JPII, Churches of the East, #11.).