

THE “WEALTH OF THE NATIONS”: A STUDY IN THE INTERTEXTUALITY OF ISAIAH 60:5, 11

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The picture in Isaiah 60 of an eschatological journey of Gentile nations bearing material riches to Jerusalem presents certain exegetical and theological challenges. A cursory reading of the text might suggest that, in relation to the NT, Isaiah is foreshadowing the post-Pentecost ingathering of the Gentiles to the kingdom of God. The mood would seem to be a joyous one among the pacified rebels as they prepare to realize their equal citizenship with Jews in the glorious eternal city. A close study of the literary context and the intertextual links, however, reveals quite a different situation. There is much to suggest that, for the Gentiles marching to Jerusalem, fear outweighs all other emotions, and that their journey is one of compulsion, for they are not to arrive in Jerusalem as free citizens but as slaves. As a vanquished people, their wealth now rightfully belongs to another.

Where do the defeated Gentiles of Isaiah 60 fit into the larger narrative of salvation history revealed in the biblical corpus? To what extent is Isaiah’s scene, with its unique language, picked up by the NT authors? And what, if any, theological tensions become apparent in approaching the NT, especially the eschatological passages of Revelation 20–22?

A highly beneficial way of addressing these questions is through a canonical-linguistic study. As evident by its name, such an analysis involves an emphasis on language and takes place within the limits of the biblical canon. “Meaning and truth are crucially related to language use,” and “the normative use [of language] is ultimately not that of ecclesial *culture* but of the biblical *canon*.”¹ Canonical-linguistic analysis involves listening for linguistic echoes and typological figurations in order “to hear the two-testament witness to God in Christ, taking seriously its plain sense, in conjunction with the apostolic teaching.”² The final form of the text is dealt with, so there is a presumptive unity for Isaiah as well as for the entire canon.³ However, such unity does not eclipse the distinctive message and context of the OT, since

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¹ Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 16 (italics his). Vanhoozer distinguishes this approach from George Lindbeck’s cultural-linguistic approach.

² Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001) 10.

³ See Brevard S. Childs, *Introduction to the OT as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 324–25.

“both testaments make a discrete witness to Jesus Christ which must be heard, both separately and in concert.”⁴

The language of “wealth of the nations” in Isa 60:5, 11 will be the linguistic “base camp” from which this investigation will be accomplished. We will first examine the setting of the text within Isaiah 60, then its intertextual links in Isaiah, the OT, and the NT. Lastly we will attempt to situate “wealth of the nations” within the larger themes which emerge out of the canon.

I. “WEALTH OF THE NATIONS” IN ISAIAH 60

Jerusalem is foregrounded in Isaiah 60 as the spiritual center of the world. Just as with God’s people, God’s city is elected and has pride of place in the eschaton. The following chiasm captures the centrality of Jerusalem in Isaiah 60:⁵

- A The dawning light of salvation (1–3)
- B The movement to Jerusalem (4–9)
- C Service to Jerusalem (10–14)
- B’ The establishment of Jerusalem (15–18)
- A’ The everlasting light of salvation for Jerusalem (19–22)

The tone conveyed by the language of the chapter is one of joy and exultation as the day dawns and Yahweh beckons Jerusalem to shine forth (אורִי).⁶ The result is that the Jewish remnant and a multitude of Gentiles stream to the royal city. The verb בוא (come, go) occurs eleven times in the chapter and is thus a key linguistic component propelling the narrative with the activity of coming and bringing.

The contrast between light and darkness plays a key role as well. The light emanating from Jerusalem is equated with, or fueled by, the כבוד יהוה (glory of the Lord; v. 1b). Meanwhile, darkness conveys the sense of sin, ignorance, hopelessness, and defeat which enshrouds the nations (v. 2). The glory of Jerusalem is seen as a force of attraction which simultaneously impels (Jews) and compels (Gentile nations) the world’s inhabitants to migrate *en masse* toward it (v. 3).

The dispersed exiles of Israel arrive, the littlest ones being carried in safety (v. 4).⁷ Some Jews are escorted on Gentile ships, the sails of which appear as doves or

⁴ Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 78.

⁵ From Gregory Polan, “Zion, the Glory of the Holy One of Israel,” in *Imagery and Imagination in Biblical Literature: Essays in Honor of Aloysius Fitzgerald, F.S.C.* (ed. Lawrence Boadt and Mark S. Smith; CBQMS 32; Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2001) 55.

⁶ The prior verses of chap. 59, as well as the first-person references in Isa 60:7, 10, 13, 15–16, 21 confirm that Yahweh himself is the speaker. As for Jerusalem as the addressee, Jan Leunis Koole, *Isaiah* (Historical Commentary on the OT; Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 1998) 222, draws attention to the feminine pronouns of Isa 60:1–7 as well as to the LXX of chap. 60, which begins Φωτίζου φωτίζου, Ιερουσαλημ.

⁷ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40–66* (NAC 15B; Nashville: B&H, 2009) 616, translates על-צד as “on the hip,” indicating that the children are carried.

clouds on the horizon to their expectant countrymen waiting at home (vv. 8–9).⁸ This homecoming elicits a great swelling of pride and honor in Jerusalem (v. 5). The fractured Jewish family has become whole again, and the nations’ hatred toward Israel has turned to envy. There is work to be done, however. The city still bears the marks of the devastation wrought by its enemies. Fittingly, the enemy nations are the ones who will rebuild the walls (v. 10) and supply the building materials and sacrifices for the temple (v. 13).

An era of peace is inaugurated as Israel’s enemies bow down and submit themselves to Yahweh and to the residents of עיר יהוה (city of the Lord; v. 14; cf. v. 10a). Violence and destruction are things of the past (v. 18). The presence of Yahweh, symbolized as an everlasting light, abides within Jerusalem and establishes her people forever (vv. 19–22).

Within this narrational context, the phrase “wealth of the nations” (חיל געם) occurs twice:

⁵ Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult, because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.⁹

¹¹ Your gates shall be open continually; day and night they shall not be shut, that people may bring to you the wealth of the nations, with their kings led in procession.

In verse 5 the phrase is paired with הַמֶּן יָם (abundance of the sea), perhaps prompting the LXX’s conflationary rendering πλοῦτος θαλάσσης καὶ ἔθνῶν καὶ λαῶν (wealth of the sea and nations and peoples).¹⁰ In verse 11, חיל געם denotes what “they” (likely the Gentile nations) will bring through the open gates of Jerusalem. The scope of the wealth being transported appears to include not just precious metals but also camels and incense (v. 6), sheep and rams (v. 7), and trees for construction (v. 13).¹¹

The nationalistic strands running through this narrative indicate that the wealth is brought out of a sense of coercion. Foreign citizens and kings are pressed into service (v. 10; שרת, to serve), kings are led in procession (v. 11; passive participle of גהג, to drive), and Israel’s oppressors bow in submission (v. 14; שחה).¹² At

⁸ Ibid. 617; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998) 207.

⁹ All English quotations of Scripture are from the ESV unless otherwise specified.

¹⁰ Smith (*Isaiah 40–66* 616) suggests that הַמֶּן, which can also mean roaring sound, describes the noise of the multitude of people arriving on ships.

¹¹ The gold, silver, bronze, and iron of v. 17 are likely excluded from this list since they are brought by Yahweh himself.

¹² Richard L. Schultz, “Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah,” in *Interpreting Isaiah: Issues and Approaches* (Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 2009) 141: “What looks like sincere worship ... is coerced. Any nation or kingdom that refuses to serve Israel will perish (v. 12a), so that even those who despise them will bow down before them.” Joseph Blenkinsopp, ed., *Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000) 212: “Repatriation of the diaspora Jews is entrusted to Gentiles ... whose lot thereafter is to serve as slaves or as a dependent serf population.” Isaiah’s imagery may have come from pre-exilic temple processions that honored the Davidic king and celebrated Yah-

the height of nationalistic language is the spectacular image of foreign kings being pressed into service as nursemaids for Israelite children; in a likely play on words with *חיל גים* Isaiah writes that Israel will suck the *חלב גים* (milk of the nations; v. 16) and nurse at the breast of kings (LXX attempts to soften this to “eat the riches of kings”; cf. Isa 61:6).¹³ The malediction of verse 12 (essentially, serve Israel or perish), which discomfits many commentators, especially seems out of place within the upbeat mood of this chapter, but it must be reckoned with as part of the final form of the text.¹⁴ “Wealth of the nations,” therefore, appears to function in service to Isaiah’s message of divine reversal in chapter 60: “For as long as anyone can remember, Israel had paid imperial tribute to others—the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Persians—all money going out. Now the process is reversed.”¹⁵ Nations which had been spoilers of Israel are now forced to give back.¹⁶ Essentially, then, the Isaianic homecoming is glorious for the Jews only. For the vanquished Gentiles, it is a journey made in fear and dread of whether they will, in the end, be spared by the victorious King Yahweh.¹⁷ Their wealth is carried as tribute meant to ensure such a hopeful fate.¹⁸

weh’s sovereignty over the nations (Andrew Wilson, *The Nations in Deutero-Isaiah: A Study on Composition and Structure* [Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1986] 234).

¹³ Milk may be a metaphor for the wealth of the nations: see Smith (*Isaiah 40–66* 622); John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* (WBC 25; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 296.

¹⁴ Some commentators advocate eliminating v. 12: “Relatively few newer exegetes dare to retain v. 12. ... In terms of content v. 12 is striking as a discordant proclamation of doom upon the nations which cannot be reconciled with the expectation expressed in vv. 1–3 that the world is irresistibly attracted by Zion” (Koole, *Isaiah* 220). Brevard S. Childs (*Isaiah* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001] 497) notes that “most eliminate it because it is allegedly prose in style and disconcertingly harsh in rhetoric.” In favor of keeping v. 12 are Polan (“Zion” 65), who in a poetic analysis finds it to be the midpoint of the poem, and John Oswalt (*The Book of Isaiah* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998] 548): “Is this not merely Israelite chauvinism? ... We ought not to dismiss this manner of expression too easily. For people of the ancient world, who were much more familiar with abuse, brutality, and cruelty than many in the modern West have been, any other promise than that there would one day be a full balancing of the books would not be much of a promise.”

¹⁵ Brueggemann (*Isaiah 40–66* 205) uses the term “great inversion.” Sarah J. Dille, “Honor Restored: Honor, Shame and God as Redeeming Kinsman in Second Isaiah,” in *Relating to the Text: Interdisciplinary and Form-Critical Insights on the Bible* (ed. Timothy J. Sandoval and Carleen Mandolfo; New York: T&T Clark International, 2003) 245, highlights the honor-shame motif: “YHWH shall restore the honor of Zion by making those who shamed her her groveling servants. ... The world must see the humiliation of Zion’s oppressors as her vindication.” Although Dille’s work covers Second Isaiah, her points are applicable here, especially given the strong verbal and theological parallels between chaps. 49 and 60, which will be dealt with below.

¹⁶ Carol J. Dempsey, “From Desolation to Delight: The Transformative Vision of Isaiah 60–62,” in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* (ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; Atlanta: SBL, 2009) 221.

¹⁷ “The occasion is the proclamation of the universal kingship of YHWH and the inauguration of his reign in Jerusalem.” Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah* 212.

¹⁸ On the ancient system of tribute paid by the nation which loses a military battle (cf. 2 Kgs 15:17–22; 16:8–9), see Roger S. Nam, *Portrayals of Economic Exchange in the Book of Kings* (Leiden: Brill, 2012) 148.

II. “WEALTH OF THE NATIONS” IN ISAIAH

As used in Isaiah 60 the phrase “wealth of the nations” consists of at least three overlapping aspects:

1. It is tribute in the form of material wealth.
2. It is brought by Gentile nations in a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
3. It is delivered to Yahweh as king of the Israelites.

For the sake of determining linguistic echoes elsewhere in the canon, it will be helpful to apply this definition in our study. We will count as intertextual links those passages that appear to include all three aspects.

1. *Potential parallels.* Several passages in Isaiah are suggestive for analysis in that they deal with a future coexistence of Jews and Gentiles, but a few may be quickly dispensed with because they do not meet the definitional criteria for echoes set out above. In Isa 2:2–3, for instance, the Gentile nations stream to the mountain of the Lord to learn from Yahweh, though the text does not indicate that they bring wealth with them (cf. Isa 27:13; 55:5). Similarly, Isa 11:6–9 pictures Jews and Gentiles living together peacefully on the mountain of the Lord (Isa 65:25 has a similar but less developed image), but again there is no mention of tribute brought to Yahweh.

Another prophecy that concerns the nations is Isa 23:18, where Tyre supplies food and clothing for the Israelites. However, no pilgrimage to Jerusalem is in view, and it is not at all clear that Tyre’s merchandise is used for the purpose of tribute. In Isa 56:6–8, foreigners are *brought* (hiph’il of בוא) by Yahweh to his holy mountain. They offer burnt offerings and sacrifices, but it is not evident that these are carried from their homeland, nor do the offerings seem to be the type of durable wealth of Isa 60:5, 11. In Isa 66:20, the nations are drawn to Jerusalem but bring nothing other than the Israelite remnant with them.

More intriguing for our purposes are Isa 18:7 and 45:14. The former speaks of the conquered Cushites paying tribute (שׂ) to Yahweh at Mount Zion, while the latter describes the wealth (גִּיעַ) of Egypt and merchandise (סַחַר) of Cush and the Sabaeans being brought to Yahweh and/or Israel. In both places the Gentiles are depicted as a conquered people, coming in chains and bowing before the Israelites. These passages appear, then, to be strong intertextual links with Isa 60:5, 11 in that they meet all three definitional criteria for “wealth of the nations.”

Isaiah 49 merits investigation for its sheer number of parallels to Isaiah 60. For instance, the Servant of Isa 49:6 mirrors Jerusalem’s role as a light to the nations in Isa 60:1–3. The Gentiles serve and bow down to the “servant of rulers” (Isa 49:7) as they do to Jerusalem in Isa 60:10–14. Furthermore, the celebrative tone of the victors in Isa 49:13 is similar to that of Isa 60:1. There are also striking verbal similarities between the two passages, beginning with the fact that Isa 49:18a and 60:4a are identical:

Lift up your eyes around and see;

שׂאִי-סְבִיב עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה

they all gather, they come to you.

כֻּלָּם נִקְבְּצוּ בְּאוֹרֶךְ

The remnant homecoming is described in ways similar to chapter 60:¹⁹

TABLE 1

<p>49:22 ... they shall bring (והביאו) your sons (בניד) in their arms, and your daughters (ובנותיך) shall be carried on their shoulders (על־כתף תנשאנה) 49:23 Kings (מלכים) shall be your foster fathers and their queens your nursing mothers (מיניקותיך)... Then you will know that I am the LORD (וידעת כי־אני יהוה) 49:26 your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob (מושיע־וְגואלְךָ אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב)</p>	<p>60:4b your sons (בניד) shall come (יבאו) from afar, and your daughters (ובנותיך) shall be carried on the hip (על־צד תאמנה) 60:16 You shall suck (וינקת) the milk of nations, you shall nurse (תינקי) at the breast of kings (מלכים) and you shall know that I, the LORD (וידעת כי אני יהוה) 60:16 (continued) am your Savior and your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob (מושיע־וְגואלְךָ אֲבִיר יַעֲקֹב)</p>
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Chapters 49 and 60 also share a nationalistic attitude toward the conquered Gentiles. The degradation and subservience of Gentiles is depicted in terms of bowing, licking the feet of the Israelites, being taken captive, and consuming their own flesh and blood (Isa 49:23–26). Nevertheless, for all the verbal similarities described above, chapter 49 contains no discussion of tribute.²⁰

Two passages toward the end of Isaiah contain the phrase “wealth of the nations.” Isaiah 61:6 uses *חיל גים* as something Israel is to eat (אכל), perhaps conveying the idea that Israel will plunder (consume) the nations’ riches. The LXX translators, though, chose to render *חיל* there using its more common gloss *ισχυον* (“strength”) rather than *πλουτος*. Isa 66:12 uses the phrase *כבוד געם* (“glory of the nations”), which may be translated as “wealth of the nations.”²¹ The picture, however, is one of foreign wealth flowing toward Jerusalem like a river, not of Gentiles carrying it as tribute. Rather, the Gentiles escort the Jewish remnant, a repatriation which is seen in v. 20 as an act of *מנחה* (“offering”). Therefore, despite the idea of

¹⁹ This comparison is adapted from Roy D. Wells (“They All Gather, They Come to You’: History, Utopia, and the Reading of Isaiah 49:18–26 and 60:4–16,” in *The Desert Will Bloom: Poetic Visions in Isaiah* [ed. A. Joseph Everson and Hyun Chul Paul Kim; Atlanta: SBL, 2009] 199).

²⁰ Perhaps the closest Isaiah 49 comes to mentioning tribute is Isa 49:24–25, where the Israelites are empowered to take the *מלקח* from the enemy nations. NIV translates the term as “plunder,” whereas other modern versions (ESV, NRSV, NAS, HCSB) have “prey,” which is even further from the idea of tribute.

²¹ Although the ESV and NASB follow the LXX in translating the Hebrew as “glory of the nations,” BDB indicates “abundance, riches” to be an acceptable rendering for *כבוד* (cf. Gen 13:2), and some commentators believe the idea of wealth fits best here. See Watts, *Isaiah 34–66* 359; Gary Stansell, “How Abraham Became Rich,” in *Ancient Israel: The OT in Its Social Context* (ed. Philip Francis Esler; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006) 107.

Gentile wealth being destined for Jerusalem, neither passage here pictures that wealth being carried in a pilgrimage as tribute to King Yahweh.

To summarize to this point, the closest parallels to Isa 60:5, 11 appear to be Isa 18:7 and 45:14.²² These texts all convey the idea of Gentile riches brought as tribute to Jerusalem to appease King Yahweh. Other Isaianic texts have similarities of one kind or another to Isaiah 60 but fall short in containing the aspects required for being true intertextual echoes of Isa 60:5, 11.

2. *Excursus: The scandal of eschatological particularity in Isaiah.* The nationalist and particularist aspects of "wealth of the nations" as employed in Isa 60:5, 11 (and Isa 18:7; 45:14) are virtually undeniable.²³ Such attitudes can understandably be viewed as distasteful in a text regarded as divinely inspired. A few considerations may be helpful, however, in ameliorating objections to Isaiah's eschatological vision. First, the texts describing subservience of Gentile nations in the eschatological kingdom are outnumbered by passages that depict Gentiles willingly and joyfully joining the ranks of God's people in peaceful cohabitation (Isa 2:2–3; 11:6–9; 27:13; 55:5; 65:25). Second, for the Gentiles who hold out in their rebellion and are vanquished, only in the end accepting the rule of Yahweh, servitude is not so much a punishment as an act of grace which, given the alternative of death, the rebels are content to receive.²⁴ Third, there are no texts which justify the importing of notions of abusive slavery into the kind of servitude that would take place in the eschatological kingdom ruled by Yahweh. Fourth, neither does Isaiah allow us to view the governance of God's people in terms of ethnocentrism:

Foreigners will perform menial tasks for Israel (49:22, 23; 60:10, 61:5) and subject themselves to the people of God (49:23; 60:11). If we keep in mind that Israel/Zion is here the Old Testament representation of the Kingdom of God, these passages acquire a new and richer significance. They then are no longer expressive of Judaistic exclusivism or superiority attitudes, but become a rich proclamation of the universal triumph and claim of the kingdom of Yahweh.²⁵

²² Perhaps it is significant for those who argue for the unity of Isaiah that these three texts—Isa 18:7, 45:14, and 60:5, 11—each come from what is traditionally believed to be a different source yet convey remarkably similar ideas.

²³ Mark Gray (*Rhetoric and Social Justice in Isaiah* [New York: T&T Clark, 2006] 105) labels Isaiah 60 as "nationalist ideology." He finds it difficult to see how the theme of Israelite domination could have had a place in the good news of Isaiah. Brueggemann (*Isaiah 40–66* 211) detects "latent imperialism" in Isaiah 60. Stansell ("How Abraham Became Rich" 108) says that in Isaiah's view foreigners will serve as "menial laborers" and that "Judeans will be to Gentiles as priests are to laity." John Kessler (*OT Theology: Divine Call and Human Response* [Waco, TX: Baylor University, 2013] 163 n. 181), sees the current state of scholarship on Isaiah as recognizing and seeking to understand the presence of nationalism and universalism together in the text.

²⁴ Kessler, *OT Theology* 165: "After the cataclysm, those nations who accept the rule of Yahweh will come to Jerusalem to worship. ... Yahweh's power and authority are thus established by defeat of the hostile assault of the nations. Yet, out of divine goodness, Yahweh does not entirely destroy the nations but leaves them a remnant of survivors."

²⁵ Dirk H. Odendaal, *The Eschatological Expectation of Isaiah 40–66 with Special Reference to Israel and the Nations* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1970) 175–76.

It seems best, then, to allow both universalism and nationalism to stand in tension. This is the stance taken by Melugin in his analysis of Deutero-Isaiah:

Isaiah 40–55 has taken only a limited step beyond a traditional Jerusalemite theology in which the nations are merely servants of Israel, and in particular, Israel's king (cf. Psalm 2; 72:8–11), with the result that in Deutero-Isaiah the nations not only bow down before Yahweh and Israel but are also said to be given salvation. Precisely how salvation and servitude are related is not made clear, however. Isaiah 40–55 leaves these tensions unresolved.²⁶

III. "WEALTH OF THE NATIONS" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

A search for intertextual links for Isa 60:5, 11 in the greater OT canon needs to reckon with Exod 12:35–36, where the escaping Israelites are described as plundering the Egyptians. In both the Exodus and Isaiah passages, Yahweh's favor of the Israelites causes the Gentiles to release their material riches. However, even with the **עַרְבֵי רֶב** (mixed multitude) accompanying the Israelites (Exod 12:38), the Exodus scene is not in keeping with the idea of a Gentile pilgrimage to Jerusalem to bring gifts to Yahweh.²⁷

Another candidate text is the narrative of the Queen of Sheba in 1 Kgs 10:1–13. The Jewish nation was, at the time of Solomon, in an ideal state: united, prosperous, and at its geographically largest. Just as Jerusalem's glory shines forth, beckoning the Gentile pilgrims in Isa 60:1–3, the queen hears of **אֶת-שִׁמְעַת שְׁלֹמֹה** **לְשֵׁם יְהוָה**, "the fame of Solomon concerning the name of Yahweh" (LXX: "the name of Solomon and the name of the Lord").²⁸ Most of the ideas from Isa 60:5, 11 are present here—material wealth is being carried by Gentiles on a pilgrimage to the king of the Jews in Jerusalem—yet only one Gentile figure (albeit with her retinue) is in view, a human king is on the throne, and her gift, though possibly expressing subservience, is not compulsory to the extent that one might think of with tribute. Thus, this account may be classified as highly suggestive of an intertextual echo, especially in view of the potential typological significance of Solomon and the queen (cf. Matt 12:42).²⁹

²⁶ Roy F. Melugin, "Israel and the Nations in Isaiah 40–55," in *Problems in Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Rolf Knierim* (ed. Henry T. C. Sun and Keith L. Eades; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 261–62. Other excellent resources on this topic include D. W. Van Winkle, "The Relationship of the Nations to Yahweh and to Israel in Isaiah 40–55," *VT* 35 (1985) 446; Schultz, "Nationalism and Universalism in Isaiah," who argues for maintaining the tension between nationalism and universalism in Isaiah; and a recent dissertation by Yongsu J. Lim, "The Nations in the Book of Isaiah: Inclusion of the Nations in Yahweh's Eschatological Salvation on Mount Zion" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2004).

²⁷ Though admittedly Isa 60:9 might be depicting the Israelites as carrying at least some of the wealth of the nations themselves, as they do in the Exodus account (cf. Polan, "Zion" 63).

²⁸ The parallel account in LXX 2 Chr 9:1 does not include "the name of the Lord."

²⁹ The methodological issues involved in typology are complex and cannot be adequately dealt with here. However, it is worth noting that some scholars have identified Solomon and the queen of Sheba as types of Christ and the Gentile nations, respectively. For example, Walter Brueggemann, *1 & 2 Kings* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2000) 137–38: "The visit articulates that Gentiles (= non-Israelites) are suppliants who must seek the approval, protection, and generosity of the state of Israel. The notion of a Gentile visiting as suppliant is exploited in the great promissory piety of Isaiah 60. . . . In Christian tradi-

A third candidate is Ezra 6:8–9 (cf. Ezra 7:15–20; Neh 2:7–8), where Cyrus orders money and sacrificial animals to be donated to the construction of the second temple in Jerusalem. In this context (Ezra 1–2) we have the repatriation of exiled Jews to Jerusalem, though a mere paucity compared to the multitudes of Isaiah 60 which throng from the sea and caravan routes in a visual spectacle. None of the comparison criteria for “wealth of the nations” is present here: there is no tribute, no Gentile pilgrimage, and no king on the throne in Jerusalem. In addition, the riches are brought by the returning Jews (e.g. Ezra 1:6, 11), while the vast majority of their compatriots remain dispersed. It is unlikely, then, that Ezra and Isaiah are viewing the same theological horizon.³⁰

Fourth, one can detect some embryonic echoes of Isa 60:5, 11 in Pss 45:12; 68:29; 76:11, but Psalm 72 stands out for the sheer number of explicit similarities with Isaiah 60. The subservience of the Gentiles in Ps 72:9, 11 finds a parallel in Isa 60:14.³¹ The coastlands and ships of Tarshish bearing tribute are mentioned in both Ps 72:10 and Isa 60:9, while references to the gold of Sheba occur in Ps 72:15 and Isa 60:6.³² As a royal psalm, the focus of Psalm 72 is squarely on the ideal king who would rule Israel, which adds to the strength of its relationship with Isaiah 60. The psalmist and Isaiah, therefore, express a kinship in their hope for Israel to have its day under the rule of the ideal king.

Fifth, in Hag 2:7–9 Yahweh declares that the temple built by the returning exiles, though inferior to Solomon’s, will one day surpass it in glory, in part because the *חמדות כל־הגוים* (“treasures of all the nations”) will come (*בוא*, a common word but one which develops the motif of pilgrimage and tribute in Isaiah 60).³³ The passage appears to describe King Yahweh’s peaceful kingdom in the eschaton (Hag 2:9) and the influx of the wealth of the nations, which will augment the glory of the temple. Of course, Yahweh’s sovereignty over the earth means that the nations bring him nothing more than what is already his (Hag 2:8).³⁴ While specific language of tribute is lacking here, it may be inferred from Hag 2:7, “I will shake (*רעש*) all nations,” which is repeated and explained in Hag 3:21–22 as military victory. Thus, Hag 2:7–9 may be suggestive of an intertextual relationship with “wealth of the nations.”

Lastly, the Gentile ingathering described in Zechariah shares commonalities with Isaiah 60. While Zech 2:11 and 8:20–23 touch briefly on a future Gentile pil-

tion, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba become the types that anticipate the rule of Jesus who will be given exotic gifts [by the Magi] from the East. In both texts, large, successful cultures and economies submit to the rule of the one authorized and legitimated by the rule of Yahweh.” Also see I. W. Provan, “Solomon,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al.; Leicester, UK: InterVarsity, 2000) 788–89.

³⁰ *Contra* Watts (*Isaiah 34–66* 294–98) who argues that the setting of Isaiah 60 is Ezra 7 and Nehemiah 2, with the “wealth of the nations” coming from Persia.

³¹ Cf. Isa 49:23.

³² Cf. Pss 45:12; 68:18, 29.

³³ The mention of silver and gold in v. 8 supports the translation of *חמדות* (lit. “desirable things”) as “treasures” (so ESV); on the plural usage of *חמדות* see Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC 32; Waco, TX: Word, 1984) 156.

³⁴ *Ibid.* 158.

grimage to Jerusalem, Zechariah 14 includes vivid details of this event. There, Yahweh's reign in Jerusalem is described, along with a bloody final battle. As a result of the battle, the "wealth of all the nations" (חיל כל־הגוים; Zech 14:14) is brought to Jerusalem, the designated recipient being King Yahweh Almighty (מלך יהוה צבאות, Zech 14:16). The vanquished Gentiles thereafter go up to the city to pay homage to Yahweh under threat of drought if they resist. This passage, which meets all three criteria for "wealth of the nations," may fittingly be called an intertextual echo of Isa 60:5, 11.

IV. "WEALTH OF THE NATIONS" IN THE NT

The visit of the magi (Matt 2:1–12) presents interesting potential for exploration, as we have Gentile emissaries making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem (παράγινωμαi echoing Isaiah's בוא), bringing gold and frankincense, both of which are paralleled in Isa 60:6, to one they call "king of the Jews" (Matt 2:2; cf. 2:6).³⁵ They are also beckoned on their pilgrimage by a light, as are the nations in Isa 60:3. Intriguingly, the possibility that the magi originated in Babylonia even more strongly positions them within the divine reversal pictured in Isaiah:

[Babylonia is] the localization most favored by the astrological implications of the rising of the star. The Babylonians or Chaldeans had developed a great interest in astronomy and astrology. Moreover, after the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century, a large colony of Jews had remained on, so that Babylonian astrologers could have learned something of Jewish messianic expectations and might have associated a particular star with the King of the Jews Magoi occur most frequently in the OT in Daniel's description of the Babylonian court.³⁶

³⁵ Several scholars link the account of the magi with Isaiah 60. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Opening the Sealed Book: Interpretations of the Book of Isaiah in Late Antiquity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 157, observes that "the characteristically oriental gifts of gold and frankincense brought to the newborn child correspond to, and may have been suggested by, the tribute which, according to Isa 60:6, will come to the future Jerusalem from the east." Brueggemann (*Isaiah 40–66* 205–6) writes: "There can be no doubt that the Matthew narrative alludes not only to the specific commodities brought but to the dramatic theme of the submission of the nations in [Isaiah 60]." Brueggemann (*1 & 2 Kings* 137–38) connects not just Isaiah and the magi but 1 Kings 10 as well; after discussing the visit of the Queen of Sheba he writes, "The visit of the 'magi' is yet one more visit of Gentiles who come in obeisance to the Jewish king. Thus Jesus, in the wake of Solomon, is the true Jewish king who receives Gentile tribute." Charles H. H. Scobie ("Israel and the Nations: An Essay in Biblical Theology," *TynBul* 43 [1992] 303) describes Matt 2:11 in terms of Isaiah's "pilgrimage of the Gentiles and their bringing of tribute." Ronald E. Clements, "Arise, Shine; For Your Light Has Come," in *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (ed. Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans; New York: Brill, 1997) 1.443, points out that Isa 60:1–6 is read alongside Matthew's account of the visit of the Magi for the season of Epiphany. Raymond E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977) 187, sees an "implicit citation of Isa 60:6" in the visit of the Magi. Cf. Dempsey, "From Desolation to Delight" 221.

³⁶ Brown, *Birth of the Messiah* 169. Further possibilities present themselves in this theory. Perhaps the magi are carrying gold looted from Solomon's temple in the sixth century BC, only this time Edom (in the person of Herod the Idumean), instead of abetting the effort, is powerless to stop it?

The visit of the magi, then, like the Queen of Sheba, echoes the “wealth of the nations” motif on a small scale, and both the queen and the magi may prefigure the Gentile nations of the eschaton.

Another NT instance of riches being brought to Jerusalem is the collection for the saints described in a number of texts (Acts 11:27–30; 24:17; Rom 15:25–27; 1 Cor 16:1–4; 2 Corinthians 8, 9). Scobie asserts, “It is hard to avoid the conclusion that as the various groups of Gentiles gathered the money and made their way to Jerusalem, Paul must have seen this at least in part as a symbolic enactment of the eschatological tribute of the nations.”³⁷ The Jerusalem church, according to Scobie, stands for the eschatological temple to which the wealth of the Gentile nations is brought. Problems abound in constructing this intertextual linkage, however:

1. An emphasis on the ethnic distinction between Jew and Gentile, necessary for this comparison to work, is antithetical to Paul’s own teaching (Gal 3:28).
2. The Gentile church is not pictured in subservience, as are the defeated Gentile nations who bow at the feet of the Jews in Isaiah 60.
3. The Gentiles do not come to Jerusalem themselves. Paul and Barnabas bring the offering in their stead.³⁸
4. The offering is designated, not as tribute, but as humanitarian aid to help the poor (Rom 15:26) and victims of famine (Acts 11:28–30). It is, according to Paul, an obligation for Gentiles to those from whom they have received spiritual blessings (Rom 15:27).
5. The texts concerning the offering do not give any significance to Jerusalem as the throne of the king.

The final NT text to be evaluated is Revelation 21, widely recognized to contain allusions to Isaiah 60.³⁹ Here Christ reigns from the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2), where there is no need for light because God is the light (Rev 21:23; cf. Isa 60:19). The nations are attracted to the light (Rev 21:24) and enter through the open city gates (echoing Isa 60:3, 11). The kings bring into the city their δόξα (glory; Rev 21:24) or τὴν δόξαν καὶ τιμὴν τῶν ἔθνων (the glory and the honor of the nations; 21:26). The allusion may be to the כבוד גִּים of Isa 66:12, which, as argued above, could denote the wealth of the nations, but then again the spectacular description of the city in Rev 21:18–21 might have made any mention of Gentile riches unnecessary in John’s mind. It is unclear whether τὰ ἔθνη refers to those defeated in the battle of chapter 19, in which case they could reasonably be thought of as bringing tribute. More likely, given the intervening judgment scene in chapter 20, they are the Gentiles who were vindicated and who passed through to the millennium, but

³⁷ Scobie, “Israel and the Nations” 303.

³⁸ Although 1 Cor 16:3 suggests that delegates would be appointed—and Acts 20:4 may list some of them—it seems a stretch to compare these delegates to the Gentile pilgrimage of Isaiah 60.

³⁹ Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002) 762; Robert H. Mounce, *The Book of Revelation* (rev. ed.; NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 396–97; Jan Fekkes III, “Isaiah and the Book of Revelation: John the Prophet as a Fourth Isaiah?,” in *“As Those Who Are Taught”: The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* (ed. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull; SBLSymS 27; Atlanta: SBL, 2006) 142.

in that case the intertextuality with Isaiah 60 is weakened.⁴⁰ The Gentiles are pictured here as equal citizens with the Jews, not vanquished and subjugated. Osborne suggests that while John is consciously drawing from Isaiah 60, he “has replaced the idea of military victory and plunder with that of conversion and worship,” which might also explain why John opted for “glory of the nations” instead of “wealth of the nations.”⁴¹

V. “WEALTH OF THE NATIONS” IN THE CANONICAL THEMES

In this final section we will examine the theological strands that witness to the unity and coherence of the testaments in their canonical shape. Childs enumerates ten of them, of which four—creation, Christ the Lord, people of God, and the kingdom of God—are pertinent to this study.⁴² The intersection of “wealth of the nations” with each of these themes will be briefly discussed.

Taking the theme of creation first, it is readily apparent that Isaiah uses the language of creation as a building block for his poetic narratives.

ברא “create” is a rare word found primarily in Genesis 1–2, a few psalms, and Isa 40–66. Yahweh creating the universe is pictured in 40:26, 28; 42:5; and 45:7, 18. He is creator of “peace and violence” in 45:7, of humankind (**אדם**) in 45:12 and 54:16, of Israel in 43:1, 7, 15, of conditions for the new exodus in 41:20 and 48:7, of a new world order in 65:17, and of salvation and joy in 57:19 and 65:18.⁴³

In Isaiah 60, the interplay of light and darkness (Isa 60:1–3, 19–20) lends the feel of Genesis 1 and of the inauguration of a new age, and the pilgrimage of nations to Jerusalem may call to mind, as a reversal, the Genesis 11 dispersion of humankind. The victorious Yahweh who takes his throne in Isaiah 60 has succeeded in quelling once for all the rebellion of the serpent (Gen 3:15). The “wealth of the nations,” a symbol of the hostile world’s power and independence, is returned to its creator and rightful owner.

The themes of Christ the Lord and the people of God can be dealt with together, as there is a long history of scholarship that views Isaiah 60 in terms of Christ and the Church. In fact, identifying Christ with Isaiah’s light to the nations

⁴⁰ Mounce (*Book of Revelation* 397) suggests that John was using prophetic language “that presupposed the continuance of Gentile peoples on the earth after the establishment of the eschatological era. The prophetic perspective was to speak of the future in terms of the historical conditions of the present. How else could the prophets describe that which lay beyond the boundaries of their daily experience? As John utilized aspects of their visions in portraying the eternal scene he inadvertently retained certain elements that were not entirely appropriate to the new setting.”

⁴¹ Osborne, *Revelation* 763.

⁴² Childs, *Biblical Theology* 349–716.

⁴³ Watts, *Isaiah* 34–66 94.

(60:3) was an early interpretation of the Church which became widespread.⁴⁴ As for the "wealth of the nations," Theodoret of Cyrus places it in an ecclesial context:

The Church of God ... receives the offerings that were formerly presented to demons, and the once-bitter sea of nations, since it has been sweetened by the wood of the cross of the Savior and has undergone that extraordinary change, offers its gifts to the Church of God.⁴⁵

Though Theodoret's identification of national Israel in Isaiah 60 with the church may not be exegetically objectionable, his notion that the vanquished nations come with a "sweetened" attitude cannot be supported by the text. Nor is it justifiable to equate the pilgrimage of the nations with the Gentiles being gathered into the Church at Pentecost (as do Cyril of Alexandria, Jerome, and Theodoret of Cyrus), given the stark imagery of subservience in Isaiah 60.⁴⁶ Similarly, to interpret the children of Isa 60:4 as Christian converts is invalid given that Isaiah clearly depicts them as Jews who already belong to the family of God and are simply returning home.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, a clear tendency away from the nationalism of Isaiah 60 is demonstrated in the above ecclesial interpretations on the part of church-era commentators. No longer is the "wealth of the nations" borne by vanquished enemies anticipating, at best, a life of servitude, but it is joyfully transported by (or along with) Gentile converts who are welcomed as equals into Jerusalem.

Among Childs' canonical themes, the strongest backdrop for "wealth of the nations" is the kingdom of God.⁴⁸ The mythology of David and Jerusalem is a powerful motif in Jewish thought, and the NT narrative of Christ draws liberally from this theological stream.⁴⁹ Although Childs is proper in asserting that "the New Testament's profile of the kingdom as the reign of love and justice revealed in Jesus Christ corrects any OT tendencies toward understanding the kingdom as the national domain of one chosen people," one can nonetheless find the theme of election running strong in the NT, coupled with the idea of a warrior king who takes vengeance on the enemies of the elect.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ Robert Louis Wilken, ed., *Isaiah: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 461–62; Thomas C. Oden, ed., *Isaiah* (ACCS; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998) 227.

⁴⁵ Johanna Manley, ed., *Isaiah through the Ages* (Menlo Park, CA: Monastery Books, 1995) 889. Cf. Oden, ACCS 231.

⁴⁶ Wilken, *Isaiah* 463–65; Oden, ACCS 228.

⁴⁷ Contra Oswalt, *Book of Isaiah*, 539, who claims that this view is "taken by most Christian commentators through the nineteenth century."

⁴⁸ Childs, *Biblical Theology* 633–34, wisely advises that scholars avoid the anachronism of understanding OT kingship solely in terms of Christ, adding that "it remains a difficult and controversial issue to establish the origins, dating, and development of the concept of Yahweh's kingly sovereignty."

⁴⁹ "Jerusalem or rather Zion, became increasingly not merely the city of David, but the city of God. All the mythopoetic imagery of the heavenly abode was transferred to Zion and celebrated in countless psalms as the place of God's dwelling (Pss. 46, 48, 76, etc.);" (ibid. 154).

⁵⁰ Ibid. 651. Contrast Childs's statement with N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013) 907, in which he argues that the election of Israel still stands in the NT, albeit reworked around one person, the true Israel, and permitting Gentiles to become part.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

TABLE 2

Comparison Scriptures	"Wealth of the nations"			
	Tribute in the form of material wealth	Brought by Gentile nations in pilgrimage	Delivered to King Yahweh	
INNER-ISAIANIC				
	Isa 2:2–3			
	Isa 11:6–9			
	Isa 18:7	√	√	√
	Isa 23:18			
	Isa 45:14	√	√	√
	Isaiah 49			
	Isa 56:6–8			
	Isa 61:6			
	Isa 66:12			
Isa 66:20				
OLD TESTAMENT				
	Exod 12:35–36			
	1 Kgs 10:1–13	?	? Queen of Sheba	? Solomon
	Ezra 6:8–9			
	Psalms 72	√	√	√
	Hag 2:7–9	?	√	√
	Zechariah 14	√	√	√
NEW TESTAMENT				
	Matt 2:1–12	?	? Magi	? Jesus
	Acts 11:27–30			
	Revelation 21		√	√

√ = meets the criterion

? = suggestive of the criterion

The phrase "wealth of the nations" is used in Isa 60:5, 11 to reinforce the theme of Gentile subjugation pictured to be a result of the climactic worldwide victory by Yahweh. The primacy of Yahweh's people (the Jews) and place (Jerusalem) are thus confirmed as they share in the material benefits of the victory. Even more so, the majesty of the king is cemented as his vanquished enemies now bring him tribute. The same line of thought is also manifested in Isa 18:7 and 45:14, so "wealth of the nations" and its associated nationalistic aspects cannot be dismissed as artifactual or even accidental in Isaianic thought.

Outside of Isaiah, "wealth of the nations" finds its strongest OT echoes in Psalm 72 and Zechariah 14. In the former, a royal psalm, the echo adds texture to the idealized view of the king as worldwide conqueror and indicates that such an attitude may have existed long before the exile. The apocalyptic perspective of Zechariah 14 places "wealth of the nations" in the context of a final cataclysmic battle in which the defeated nations suffer humiliation and hardship.

Two passages suggestive of an echo are 1 Kgs 10:1–13 and Matt 2:1–12. Intertextually, the events related by these texts may be seen as scaled-down versions of Isaiah 60, and thus prefigurements of the eschatological battle, with a small retinue of Gentiles standing in for the nations as a whole. While subservience is indicated in the gifting of riches by the queen and the magi, these texts lack the elements of war and subjugation; the Gentile actors come willingly and with an attitude of awe.

Elsewhere in the NT, the text of Revelation 21 shares the most linguistic and conceptual features with "wealth of the nations." The match is not complete, however, as a result of John's perspective on the denouement of history reflecting the canonical trajectory toward (1) God's people as a multiethnic group composed of "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7:9) and (2) hell as the final destination for the wicked (Rev 20:15). Thus, the ideas of tribute and servitude implicit in "wealth of the nations" become abrogated because the relationship between victor and vanquished is fundamentally changed in the broadening of the prophetic perspective.