

‘WIDE IS THE GATE AND SPACIOUS THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO  
DESTRUCTION’: MATTHEW 7.13 IN LIGHT OF  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE<sup>1</sup>

Michael Knowles

McMaster Divinity College, Ontario, Canada

Matthew 7.13-14 records the first of four exhortations that conclude the Sermon on the Mount:

Enter through the narrow gate:

for wide is the gate and spacious the road that leads to destruction,  
and there are many who enter through it.

How narrow is the gate and constricted the road that leads to life,  
and there are few who find it.<sup>2</sup>

While referring in context to the difficulty of obedience to Jesus’ teaching, this passage takes on added significance when read in light of the social and political realities of Matthew’s day. Specifically, such a reading poses the question of what actual ‘gates’ or ‘roads’ might have

1. An abbreviated version of this paper was presented at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, November 20, 2000. I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the valuable contributions to this study made by Eleanor Irwin, Richard Longenecker and Peter Richardson.

2. The references to ‘the Law and the prophets’ in Mt. 5.17 and 7.12 serve as a structural and thematic *inclusio* demarcating the main body of instruction in the Sermon on the Mount, followed by a four-fold conclusion: the two gates and ways (7.13-14); trees and their fruit (7.15-20); ‘Not all who say to me, “Lord, Lord”’, etc. (7.21-23); and the parable of the two builders (7.24-27). Cf. W.D. Davies and D.C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew* (ICC; 3 vols.; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1988–1997), I, pp. 484, 688-89; similarly, A. Denaux, ‘Der Spruch von den zwei Wegen im Rahmen des Epilogs der Bergpredigt (Mt 7,13-14 par. Lk 13,23-24): Tradition und Redaktion’, in J. Delobel (ed.), *Logia: Les paroles de Jésus: Mémorial Joseph Coppens* (BETL, 35; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1982), pp. 305-31 (305-15).

served as literal referents for its metaphoric imagery. The following study will review Matthean redaction of 7.13-14, examine archaeological evidence concerning gates and roads in early Roman Palestine, and seek to locate 7.13-14 thematically within the wider context of Matthew's Gospel, in order to demonstrate that the references to 'wide' gates and 'spacious' roads convey specifically Roman (or more properly, anti-Roman) overtones.

### 1. *Matthean Redaction of 7.13-14*

The Matthean pericope is carefully structured so as to establish a series of precise thematic parallels:

Εἰσελάθατε διὰ τῆς στενῆς πύλης·	
ὅτι πλατεῖα ἡ πύλη	τί στενή ἡ πύλη
καὶ εὐρύχωρος ἡ ὁδὸς	καὶ τεθλιμμένη ἡ ὁδὸς
ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ἀπόλειαν	ἡ ἀπάγουσα εἰς τὴν ζωὴν
καὶ πολλοὶ εἰσὶν	καὶ ὀλίγοι εἰσὶν
οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι δι' αὐτῆς·	οἱ εὐρίσκοντες αὐτήν.

Distinctive features of the Matthean formulation emerge in comparison to the parallel text in Lk. 13.24: 'Strive to enter through the narrow door (τῆς στενῆς θύρας); for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able'. Although the degree of Matthean dependence is much-debated, common vocabulary (ὀλίγοι...πολλοί; εἰσελάτατε // εἰσελθεῖν; στενῆς) and themes (points of entry; success or failure to find 'life' and salvation) point to a common origin in tradition.<sup>3</sup> In place of Luke's θύρα, 'door', Matthew refers to a πύλη, which usually designates a gate providing primary access to a city through its defensive wall.<sup>4</sup> This

3. Whether representing Q (e.g. S. Schulz, *Q: Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* [Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972], pp. 309-12), extensive additions to Q (e.g. U. Luz, *Matthew 1-7: A Commentary* [Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1989], pp. 434-35), or M material (so T.W. Manson, *The Sayings of Jesus as Recorded in the Gospels according to St. Matthew and St. Luke Arranged with Introduction and Commentary* [London: SCM Press, 1949], pp. 124, 175). Full discussion and bibliography in Denaux, 'Der Spruch von den zwei Wegen', pp. 316-29.

4. On these terms, see further J. Jeremias, 'θύρα', *TDNT*, III, p. 173, and 'πύλη, πυλῶν', *TDNT*, VI, p. 921. Although the second (v. 13b) and third (v. 14a) instances of πύλη are lacking in a number of witnesses (including the original hand of Sinaiticus), three lines of evidence favor their inclusion: (1) externally, the

meaning is aptly illustrated by Matthew's only other use of the term, in 16.18, where the 'gates (πύλαι) of Hades' provide a ready counterpart to the 'gate...that leads to destruction' in 7.13. More broadly, πύλη can also refer to a Temple gate (Acts 3.10) or to the gate of a prison (Acts 12.10).<sup>5</sup>

But Matthew expands the comparison by inserting a second image: that of the 'road' (ὁδός). Generally speaking, this word applies (in its literal sense) to everything from a footpath to a city street to a highway.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, the same term can describe both the urban street and the inter-urban road that lie on either side of a city gate. Matthean usage, however, is more restricted. When he wishes to designate specifically urban geography, the evangelist employs ῥυμή (a narrow street or lane: 6.5), πλατεῖα (a 'broad' street: 6.5, 12.19), or ἀγορά (marketplace: 11.16, 20.3, 23.7).<sup>7</sup> By comparison, at least fourteen, and possibly as many as seventeen, of the twenty occurrences of ὁδός in this Gospel—apart from the present passage—refer to roads and travel outside the city.<sup>8</sup> Thus if ὁδός in 7.13-14 is to be read literally—as well as

preponderance of textual evidence; (2) internally, the likelihood that the reference was deleted to clarify the imagery; and (3) literary structure. See B.M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (London: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. xix. Both θύρα and πύλη lie within the semantic domain of Aramaic (ܕܪܗ; cf. Dan. 2.49 [LXX αὐλή, 'court']; Dan. 3.26 [LXX 3.25: τὸ στόμα, 'door']; Ezra 7.24; ܕܪܗ 'gatekeeper' [LXX 2 Esd. 7.24: πυλωρός]).

5. In any event, Matthew's choice of vocabulary may reflect paronomasia, either between πύλη ('gate') and πολλοί ('many') or, indirectly, between Hebrew תורה (Torah, 'Law') and Aramaic ܕܪܗ ('gate'), represented by νόμος and πύλη in Mt. 7.12 and 13, respectively. On the other hand, the Lukan (Q?) vocabulary suggests the possibility of a trilingual word-play: תורה-ܕܪܗ-θύρα.

6. See, further, W. Michaelis, 'ὁδός κτλ.', *TDNT*, V, pp. 42-43, 48-49, 65-69; J.P. Louw and E.A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains: Second Edition* (2 vols.; New York: United Bible Societies, 1989), domain1.99 [I, pp. 18-19].

7. Cf. τρίβος, 'path': Mt. 3.3 // Mk 1.3 (from LXX Isa. 40.3); ἄμφοδον, 'street': Mk 11.4, del. Mt. 21.6.

8. Mt. 2.12 (the route of the Magi); 8.28 (+ Mk 5.4); 10.5 (+ Mk 6.8; εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθῃτε may be read either literally ['do not travel a Gentile road'] or metaphorically [*JB*: 'do not make your way to Gentile territory'], but in either case the phrase refers to inter-city travel); 10.10 (= Mk 6.8); 13.4, 19 (= Mk 4.4, 15; the 'path' on which seed falls); 15.32 (= Mk 8.3); 20.17 (= Mk 10.32; to Jerusalem); 20.30 (= Mk 10.46; from Jericho); 21.8 *bis* (+ Mk 11.8; to Jerusalem); and 21.19 (+ Mk 11.13; from Bethany). Mt. 3.3 (= Mk 1.3) and its Q doublet in 11.10 (= Lk.

metaphorically—Matthean usage indicates that it probably refers to roads or thoroughfares outside (rather than within) the city walls.

It is widely observed that the purpose of this addition is to incorporate the wisdom motif of the 'two ways'. Based originally on such texts as Deut. 11.26 and Jer. 21.8, 'the theme of the two ways is a fixed item of Jewish moral theology'.<sup>9</sup> Although the 'two ways' are not explicitly mentioned elsewhere in his Gospel, Matthew consistently depicts the challenge of the Kingdom in similarly bi-polar terms. Disciples must choose between two masters (6.24) and two foundations (7.24-27), while the good and the wicked are, respectively, sheep and wolves (7.15), good trees and bad (7.17-20), wise and foolish bridesmaids (25.1-12), sheep and goats (25.31-46). In short, they are revealed by their actions to be either 'good' or 'bad' (so, variously, 13.48 and 22.10). Such parallels confirm that one purpose of Mt. 7.13-14 is to alert the reader to the difficulty—and necessity—of obedience under God's reign (cf. Lk. 19.24: 'Strive [ἀγωνίζεσθε] to enter through the narrow door').

The gateway to destruction proves unexpectedly accommodating (πλατεῖα; 'broad', 'wide'), while the road leading in the same direction is equally capacious: the adjective εὐρύχωρος ('open') connotes 'freedom and prosperity' (cf. LXX Ps. 30.9 [31.8]; Hos. 4.16; Isa. 30.23).<sup>10</sup> By contrast, the gateway to 'life' is στενός, meaning physically

7.27) cite LXX Isa. 40.3. Matthew deletes six additional Markan uses (Mt. 12.1 [– Mk 2.23]; 16.13 [– Mk 8.27]; 18.1 [– Mk 9.33, 34]; 19.6 [– Mk 10.17]; 20.34 [– Mk 10.52]), and one from Q: Mt. 8.19 (– Lk. 9.57). The three remaining, clearly metaphorical uses of ὁδός are 5.25 ('on the way to court'), 21.32 (the 'way of righteousness') and 22.16 (= Mk 12.14; 'the way of God').

Mt. 4.15 is ambiguous in its citation of LXX Isa. 8.23 (ὁδὸν θαλάσσης, 'way of the sea'), but only in Mt. 22.9 is there any possibility that ὁδός might designate a city street, where Matthew has διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν (read as 'outlets of streets'; see BAGD, διέχοδος; cf. Lk./Q 14.21, τὰς πλατεῖας καὶ ῥύμας τῆς πόλεως). The following verse, however, seems to specify that these too are extra-mural roads (Mt. 22.10 ὁδοῦς // Lk. 14.23 ὁδοῦς καὶ φραγμούς), a point made more obvious by the fact that the city in question has just been burned to the ground!

9. Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, p. 695, with reference (pp. 695-96) to the motif of the two ways elsewhere in the Old Testament, intertestamental and Greco-Roman literature.

10. A.H. McNeile, *The Gospel according to St Matthew: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes, and Indices* (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 94; so Moulton–Milligan, p. 265. According to Louw and Nida, the adjective refers to 'being broad and spacious, with the implication of agreeable and pleasant' (*Greek–English Lexicon*, domain 81.18 [I, p. 709]).

narrow and confining as well as figuratively inflexible and strict.<sup>11</sup> And the corresponding ‘way’ is τεθλιμμένη, which implies not only literal constriction and difficulty, but affliction or persecution (θλίψις) as well.<sup>12</sup> In short, both the wording and the placement of this passage reinforce its function as a pivotal instruction regarding the proper response of discipleship. In contrast to the ‘many’ who choose an accommodating but ultimately ruinous course, only the ‘few’ who venture the exacting path of obedience and discipleship may expect to enter into ‘life’. Hearers (readers) may be expected to choose accordingly.

But this reading leaves certain questions unanswered. First, notwithstanding the redactional importance of the added reference to a ‘road’, both the opening injunction (‘Enter through the narrow gate’) and the order of the imagery (the ‘gate’ precedes the ‘road’) suggest that the ‘gate’, rather than the ‘way’, remains the primary image throughout. This emphasis looms even larger once we recognize that 7.13 exhibits a chiasmic structure incorporating three references to gateways and only one to the road:

Enter [εἰσέλθατε] through the narrow *gate*:  
*a* for wide is the *gate*  
*b* and spacious the road  
*b'* that leads to destruction,  
*a'* and there are many who enter through *it* [= the gate: οἱ εἰσερχόμενοι  
 δι' αὐτῆς = τῆς πύλης]<sup>13</sup>

Yet this predominance of gateway imagery is not easily accounted for by the precedents usually cited from wisdom tradition.<sup>14</sup>

11. So LSJ, p. 1638; Moulton–Milligan, p. 588.

12. So A.J. Mattill, Jr, “The Way of Tribulation”, *JBL* 98 (1979), pp. 531-42; followed by Luz, *Matthew 1–7*, p. 436; Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, p. 700. This interpretation would appear more obvious in a multilingual setting, insofar as narrowness, constraint, distress and affliction are all included within the semantic range of Hebrew צָרָר and its cognates (cf. Mattill, “Way of Tribulation”, p. 540). The demanding ‘way’ of the Kingdom may also be thematically implicit in Luke’s redactional setting, where this saying sets the tone for the second leg of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke: Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [AB, 28, 28a; 2 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1981, 1985], II, pp. 1020-21).

13. So Denaux, ‘Der Spruch von den zwei Wegen’, p. 322.

14. Notwithstanding the partial parallels offered by the Cynic/Stoic Tabula of Cebeas, *T. Abr.* 8 (Rec. B), and possibly 4 *Ezra* 7.6-9, Luz comments, ‘The contrast of

Secondly, whereas the motif of the 'two ways' typically describes the alternative destinies (destinations!) of 'life' and 'death', Matthew speaks instead of ἀπώλεια, 'destruction'. This may well be an eschatological adaptation of the wisdom motif, but if so, its emphasis on annihilation is at variance with the motif of extended punishment and torment that final judgment more frequently conveys in this Gospel (e.g. weeping and gnashing of teeth in fire or darkness: 8.12; 13.41-42, 49-50; 22.13; 25.30; cf. 18.34-35; 25.46).<sup>15</sup>

Thirdly, and perhaps most puzzling, is the confusing nature of the imagery itself. The initial image of the gate in 7.13 implies direct access or immediate entry into one of two different spiritual realms. This is precisely how the same imagery functions in Mt. 16.18, where the 'gates of Hades [πύλαι ᾗτου]' represent the point of entry into the domain of God's enemies. In Hebrew poetic tradition, the kind of parallelism found in 7.13-14 typically entails a heightening of imagery and progressive intensification of meaning. Thus the pairing of 'gate' and 'road' (in that order) could entail a metaphoric progression from 'entry into' to 'continuance within' the respective realms. Read in this manner, the sequence πύλη...ὁδός might suggest entry via a city gate and continued travel along its streets. Yet construing the image in this way contradicts the language of the metaphor itself, since the 'roads' in question are also described as directly 'leading to [ἀπάγουσα εἰς]' life and destruction, respectively. The same language equally undermines the only other option, that the image depicts a road leading to a gate. From this we are forced to conclude that the images in this passage are linked analogically, but not topographically: they both refer directly to their common 'destination', without either being subordinate to the other. In each half of the saying, then, the 'gate' and the 'way' serve as conceptual equivalents, without necessarily depicting the sequential steps of a longer journey.<sup>16</sup>

the two gates is quite original and possibly completely without Jewish models' (*Matthew 1-7*, p. 434 n. 11).

15. On the eschatological overtones of 7.13-14, see especially Mattill, "Way of Tribulation", *passim*; J. Gnilka, *Das Matthäusevangelium* (HTKNT; 2 vols.; Freiburg: Herder, 1986), I, pp. 268-71; and, with regard to 7.13-27 as a whole, Denaux, 'Der Spruch von den zwei Wegen', p. 309.

16. So, e.g., W. Michaelis, 'ὁδός κτλ.', *TDNT*, V, p. 71; J. Dupont, *Les Béatitudes* (2 vols.; Paris: Gabalda, 1958), I, p. 99 and n. 1; E. Schweizer, *The Good News according to Matthew* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975), pp. 184-85.

Interpreting a passage such as this requires one to strike a judicious balance between the literal and figurative poles of its constitutive metaphors. Gates and roads are real objects in first-century Palestine, yet serve here in a figurative sense. Interpretation must be neither so non-literal as to ignore the concrete value of the referents, nor so literalistic as to insist that the ‘gate’ be placed at one end of the ‘road’ or the other. Thus we reach the interpretative crux of the passage by asking what literal features of the first-century landscape Matthew intends to describe, and whether knowledge of them adds to our understanding of his metaphoric imagery. One solution, proposed by Derrett, is that the metaphor contrasts a wide city gate, where tax collectors lie in wait to exact exorbitant tolls, with a narrow pedestrian gate elsewhere in the city wall, by which knowledgeable citizens might evade financial loss or ‘waste’ (cf. Mt. 26.8).<sup>17</sup> Although Derrett does not cite archaeological evidence in support of his ingenious proposal, Josephus mentions ‘a concealed gate near the Hippicus tower’ through which Jerusalem’s defenders were able to launch raids against the besieging Romans (*War* 5.284 [LCL, used throughout this article]).<sup>18</sup> Similarly, Bliss and Dickie discovered a postern gate only 4 feet, 10 inches wide (1.47 m), carved in bedrock in the south-west quadrant of Jerusalem’s first wall.<sup>19</sup>

But the search for a ‘narrow gate’ is constrained by the function of the imagery itself, for in their present context Matthew’s ‘narrow gate’ and ‘constricted way’ represent the teaching of Jesus, as typified by the

17. J.D.M. Derrett, ‘The Merits of the Narrow Gate (Mt. 7.13-14, Lk 13.24)’, *JSNT* 15 (1982), pp. 20-29. Similarly, Michaelis comments, ‘a wide city gate is easily found, whereas a narrow concealed entry through a wall is not so easily discovered. In all cases the assumption is that finding comes only after strenuous search’ (‘ὁδός κτλ.’, *TDNT*, V, p. 75).

18. Derrett (‘Merits’, p. 28 n. 10) cites E.F.F. Bishop (*Jesus of Palestine: The Local Background to the Gospel Documents* [London: Lutterworth, 1955], pp. 83-84) in support of his argument, but Bishop’s evidence is entirely from the modern era. Discussion of the similar interpretation for Mk 10.25 // Mt. 19.24 (‘It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven’), to which Derrett also appeals, is reviewed by Mattill, “‘Way of Tribulation’”, p. 543 n. 57 and p. 544 n. 58.

19. F.J. Bliss and A.C. Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem 1894–1897* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1898), pp. 87-88. Noting its proximity to the Essene Gate, Pixner suggests that the Essenes would have used this narrow postern to re-enter their residential quarter following ritual purification (B. Pixner, ‘Jerusalem’s Essene Gateway’, *BARev* 23.3 [1997], pp. 28-29).

Sermon on the Mount. The imagery of a restrictive road or gateway is thus already partially clarified by the difficulty of discipleship.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the initial emphasis of the passage is on the wide gate and broad road, images for which the immediate context provides no obvious explanation. While they may simply represent an extension of the root metaphor (the 'narrow gate'), the lack of a figurative referent characterized by broadness, freedom, or ease places greater heuristic weight upon the literal value of the larger gate and highway. Accordingly, whereas the question of a literal referent for the narrow gate remains open, some degree of clarity can be attained by seeking to account in historical and archaeological terms for the 'wide gate' and 'spacious road', as representative of all that obedient disciples must shun.

## 2. City Gates and Walls in Herodian/Early Roman Palestine

### a. Evidence from Josephus

The gates and walls of a city served a threefold purpose: in addition to their obvious military importance, they were an indication of wealth and civic status, and thus—at least in the Roman world—constituted public, political, and even religious monuments.<sup>21</sup> For his part, Josephus identifies as many as forty walled cities and fortresses in early Roman Palestine, and claims to have directed the fortification of many such locations in person (*War* 2.573-74).<sup>22</sup> The Mishnah concurs in listing

20. While remote, the possibility of a Matthean allusion to an entrance such as Jerusalem's south-west postern gate (previous note) is intriguing, since its suggestion of the need for stringent purity would cohere with the earlier injunction in Mt. 5.20: 'Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'. By the same token, narrow passageways beneath the Temple precincts also provided access to ritual purification (*m. Mid.* 1.9; *m. Tam.* 1.1; see B. Mazar, 'Herodian Jerusalem in Light of Excavations South and South-West of the Temple Mount', *IEJ* 28 [1978], p. 236; M. Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem* [trans. I. Friedman; New York: Harper & Row, 1985], pp. 145-47).

21. D. Sperber, *The City in Roman Palestine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 152.

22. The passage refers, *inter alia*, to Jotapata, Bersabe, Selame, Caphareccho, Japha, Sigoph, Itabyrion, Tarichaeae, Tiberias, Acchabaron, Seph, Jamnith and Mero (in Galilee); Seleucia, Sogane and Gamala (in Gaulanitis). The less reliable parallel in Josephus, *Life* 187-88 includes a number of variants. Some of the walls and gates in question also figure prominently elsewhere in Josephus's narrative: e.g. Tarichaeae

among the cities that had been walled since the time of Joshua, Sepphoris, Gush-Halav (Gischala), Jotbah (Jotapata), Gamala, ‘Gadwad’ (Gadara?), Hadid, Ono and Jerusalem (*m. ‘Arak.* 9.6; cf. *m. Meg.* 1.1).<sup>23</sup> Many city walls, however, were the work of Herod the Great, who frequently used building projects as instruments of homage to Rome.<sup>24</sup> Entire cities were established to this end, notably Samaria ‘Sebaste’ (the Greek equivalent of ‘Augusta’; *Ant.* 15.296), Caesarea Maritima (*War* 1.413-14), and Agrippium (Anthedon: *War* 1.416). Josephus’s comment is apt:

In short, one can mention no suitable spot within his realm, which he left destitute of some mark of homage to Caesar. And then, after filling his own territory with temples, he let the memorials of his esteem overflow into the province, and erected in numerous cities monuments to Caesar (*War* 1.407).

Ignoring altogether the massive restoration of Jerusalem and its Temple—and his own observation that this was a work of ‘piety [εὐσέβεια]’ (*War* 1.400-401)—Josephus later insists that Herod’s endeavors betrayed a consistent Gentile bias:

and Tiberias (*War* 2.609, 2.635-38; 3.464-65; *Life* 163), Jotapata (*War* 3.158-60, etc.), Japhia (*Life* 230; *War* 3.290: ‘protected by a double ring of walls’), and Sepphoris (*Life* 108, etc., which both Josephus [*War* 2.510-11; 3.61] and the Mishnah [*m. ‘Arak.* 9.6] identify as a strong fortress). Other walled cities include Gischala in Galilee (*Life* 45, 71; cf. *War* 4.112-13); ‘Bethennabris’ in Perea (*War* 4.419-30; Beth-Nimrah?); Samaria Sebaste, which Herod ‘surrounded...with a strong wall’ (*Ant.* 15.296-98; cf. *War* 1.403); Nain and ‘Capharabis’ in Idumea, the latter possessing an ‘exceptionally strong’ wall (*War* 4.511, 553); and the city-state of Ascalon (*War* 3.9-16, etc.). In addition, Josephus refers to the walled fortresses of Alexandria (*War* 1.163-64, 308), Cyprus (*War* 1.417; *Ant.* 16.143), and Hyrcania (*War* 1.161, 167); two by the name of Herodion (*War* 1.419-21); as well as Machaerus (*War* 7.172-74, etc.), Masada (*War* 7.285-89, etc.), Malatha, and the otherwise unknown ‘Gittha’ (which he places, alternatively, in Idumea, *War* 1.326, or Judea, *Ant.* 14.450). On the identification of these sites, see B. Bar-Kochva, ‘Notes on the Fortresses of Josephus in Galilee’, *IEJ* 24 (1974), pp. 108-16.

23. Mishnaic citations are from H. Danby, *The Mishnah: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933).

24. See ‘Herod’s Buildings’, in P. Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 174-215, with a comprehensive, dated list of projects, pp. 197-202. Herod’s largesse throughout the Eastern Mediterranean (including the construction of city walls for the sea port of Byblos/Gebal) is described in *War* 1.422-28 and *Ant.* 16.146-49.

It was generally admitted that he was on more friendly terms with Greeks than with Jews. For instance, he adorned the cities of foreigners by giving them money, building baths and theaters, erecting temples in some and porticoes in others, whereas there was not a single city of the Jews on which he deigned to bestow even minor restoration or any gift worth mentioning (*Ant.* 19.329).

Herod's sons continued their father's tradition of building cities as monuments to their Roman patrons. Herod Antipas, for instance, established Tiberias c. 18–20 CE with walls on three sides and the Sea of Galilee for a fourth (*Ant.* 18.36–38). He is said to have built walls for Sepphoris and 'Betharamphtha' (biblical Beth-Haran), surnaming the former 'Autocratoris' in deference to Caesar Augustus and the latter 'Julias' in honor of the emperor's wife. Not to be outdone, his half-brother Philip renamed Paneas, 'Caesarea' (hence, 'Caesarea Philippi'), and fortified Galilean Bethsaida, designating the latter 'Julia' as a gesture of homage to the emperor's daughter (*Ant.* 18.27–28).

Thus from the testimony of Josephus we note, first, how commonplace fortified walls—and therefore also the gates that provided access through them—appear to have been in Herodian/Roman Palestine (even for 'villages', κώμαις: *Life* 187).<sup>25</sup> Secondly, it appears that the erection or re-fortifying of walls was typically motivated by the threat of imminent conflict (e.g. Gischala, fortified by the rebel leader John [*Life* 189; cf. *War* 2.575, 590], and the hasty completion of Jerusalem's 'third wall' [*War* 5.155]).<sup>26</sup> Indeed, Herod Agrippa's experience in Jerusalem proves the opposite equally true: the re-fortifying of city walls could be interpreted as evidence of imminent insurrection (*Ant.* 19.327; cf. *War* 5.152).

This brief survey demonstrates that the reference to gates in Mt. 7.13–14 appeals to a familiar feature of daily life in Palestine of the Herodian/early Roman era, but one that would have taken on added significance in the context of invasion or insurrection. The question

25. More direct evidence of this fact continues to emerge from archaeological excavation of sites in regard to which Josephus makes no mention of city walls: e.g. Abila (cf. W.H. Mare, 'The 1988 Season of Excavation at Abila of the Decapolis', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 35 [1991], pp. 206–208) and Tel Dor (cf. E. Stern, 'Dor', in E. Stern [ed.], *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* [4 vols.; Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society and Carta, 1993], I, pp. 363–67).

26. Compare the activity of Bacchides in an earlier era: *Ant.* 13.15–16 and 1 Macc. 9.50–52.

remains, however, whether Matthew has particular gates, or kinds of gates, in mind.

b. *City Gates as Symbols of Rome*

Three lines of evidence suggest that Mt. 7.13 has in view the kind of wide gates typical of Roman civic architecture: first, the literary parallel provided by Mt. 10.5; secondly, the theological symbolism of Roman city gates; and, thirdly, the prevalence of Roman style city gates in the eastern Roman empire of Matthew's (and of Jesus') day.

1. *Matthew 10.5*. That the 'wide gate' of Mt. 7.13 symbolizes, not cities in general, but Gentile cities in particular, is suggested by the formal parallel of Mt. 10.5.<sup>27</sup> Here Jesus instructs his disciples in terms that match both the structure and the content of 7.13-14:

εἰς ὁδὸν ἐθνῶν μὴ ἀπέλθητε καὶ  
εἰς πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν μὴ εἰσέλθατε.<sup>28</sup>

Although by way of prohibition rather than positive command, this passage likewise conveys instructions on how and where obedient disciples may travel, using the same or similar verbs (ἀπέλθητε...εἰσέλθητε, 10.5 // εἰσέλθατε, 7.13). Both passages juxtapose references to the 'way' (ὁδός) and to the 'city' (πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν in 10.5; via synecdoche—the city gate—in 7.13).<sup>29</sup> In 10.5, of course, the imagery is more literal than metaphorical: the disciples are told to avoid Gentiles and Samaritans, groups represented (again via synecdoche) by their cities and roads. Instead, they are to seek out 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel' (10.6).

As internal evidence, Mt. 10.5 thus provides good grounds for thinking that the 'wide gate' of 7.13 also conveys Gentile overtones. Such a reading is rendered more plausible by the form and function of monumental Roman city gates, the presence of such gates in the world

27. M material: see further S.H. Brooks, *Matthew's Community: The Evidence of his Special Sayings Material* (JSNTSup, 16; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 49-50.

28. Literally, 'In a way of Gentiles do not set out and into a city of Samaritans do not enter'.

29. The pairing of ὁδός with πόλιν and πύλη, respectively, is unique to these passages.

of Jesus and of Matthew, and indications of how their symbolism would likely have been viewed by proponents and opponents alike.

2. *The Theological Symbolism of Roman City Gates*. From the third century BCE onward, the gates and walls of the Roman city 'came to stand for the concept, the idea, of the city'.<sup>30</sup> They were rich in political and theological significance, symbolizing Roman supremacy in local form. As such, walls and gates 'were always *res sacra*, under public ownership and the tutelage of the gods'.<sup>31</sup> In a key move, architects of the Augustan era (27 BCE–14 CE) juxtaposed commemorative arches with city gates so as to combine defensive and ideological purposes into one. The arch provided an ideal base, and the city gate the ideal location, for displaying decorative statues as instruments of Imperial (theological) propaganda.<sup>32</sup>

Surviving architectural remains, together with numismatic evidence, indicate that city gates and monumental arches were often highly decorated with imperial imagery. Images of triumphant soldiers, emperors and Roman deities typically complemented a dedicatory inscription: 'texts, coins, and reliefs record the profusion of sculpture that arose from pedestals, ressauts, and above all from attics'.<sup>33</sup> Still visible on the Porta Marzia at Perugia, for instance, are the figures of Jupiter,

30. W.L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire*. II. *An Urban Appraisal* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 82. The image of Tyche, goddess of Antioch on the Orontes, her head crowned with the city walls, appears both in statuary and on Syrian coinage from the first century BCE (A. Negev [ed.], *Archaeological Encyclopedia of the Holy Land* [London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972], pp. 24-25). Fortuna, goddess of cities, typically bears the *corona muralis*, as illustrated by a late first- to early second-century bust from Corinth (V.P. Furnish, 'Corinth in Paul's Time: What Can Archaeology Tell Us?', *BARev* 14.3 [1988], p. 21). The goddess Roma appears in this form on coins minted at Caesarea under Vespasian, many dated c. 67 CE, and subsequently at Tiberias and elsewhere (L.I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1975], pp. 31-32 and n. 211).

31. S. Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications* (London: Batsford, 1983), p. 13.

32. I.A. Richmond, 'Commemorative Arches and City Gates in the Augustan Age', *JRS* 23 (1933), pp. 149-74, esp. pp. 172-74, citing examples from Pola, Verona, Orange, Minturno, Fano (Iulia Fanestrus; 9–10 CE), Rimini (27 BCE), Perugia, Spello, Saintes, Langres and Reims. Cf. MacDonald, *Architecture of the Roman Empire*, II, p. 82: 'by the time of Augustus, the arched city gateway had been fully metamorphosed into the type of arch commonly called triumphal'.

33. MacDonald, *Architecture of the Roman Empire*, II, p. 94.

Castor and Pollux, whose presence ‘may be taken as a mythological statement of the divine right behind Rome’s executive power’.<sup>34</sup> At Syrian Antioch, the Eastern Gate in the city wall attributed to Tiberius was surmounted by the stone image of a she-wolf nursing Rome’s mythic founders, Romulus and Remus, a paramount symbol of Roman sovereignty.<sup>35</sup> And Foerster’s observation regarding the free-standing gate at Galilean Tiberias is equally relevant: ‘l’intérieur de la porte était pourvu de niches de chaque côté qui peuvent avoir contenu des statues’<sup>36</sup> [‘the interior of the gate was supplied with niches on either side which could have contained statues’].

More particularly, triumphal arches were closely associated both with the cult of the Emperor and with the divinization of victorious Roman generals. Throughout the Empire, they provided the location for and thereafter memorialized in concrete form the epiphanic *Adventus* of the deified Emperor. Triumphal processions following military victory similarly commenced at the city gate, whether that of Alexandria or Ephesus in the case of Antony and Cleopatra, or at Rome’s *Porta Triumphalis* in the case of Titus, Vespasian, and countless others (*War* 7.123-31).<sup>37</sup> Perhaps viewed as a symbol of the celestial arc, the arched gateway ‘was the place where the populace received with dramatic pageantry their ruler as a divine being, a triumphant victor, and a potential savior’.<sup>38</sup>

34. Richmond, ‘Commemorative Arches and City Gates’, p. 162 and pl. xix, p. 1.

35. G. Downey, *A History of Antioch in Syria from Seleucus to the Arab Conquest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 181-82. Although the precise date of Tiberius’s building projects is subject to debate, their origin in the Herodian era does not appear to be in question (Downey, *History of Antioch*, pp. 174-76). Josephus mentions the city walls in connection with a visit by the emperor Titus (*War* 7.100). The heuristic relevance of Antioch-on-the-Orontes is indicated by its status as the ‘best educated guess’ for the geographic origin of Matthew’s Gospel (so Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, I, pp. 143-47; and, more comprehensively, D.C. Sim, *The Gospel of Matthew and Christian Judaism: The History and Social Setting of the Matthean Community* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998], pp. 40-62).

36. G. Foerster, ‘[Chronique Archéologique:] Tibériade’, *RB* 82 (1975), p. 108. Similarly, G. Foerster, ‘Tiberias: Excavations in the South of the City’, in Stern (ed.), *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, IV, pp. 1470-71.

37. E.B. Smith, *Architectural Symbolism of Imperial Roman and the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1956; repr. New York: Hacker Art Books, 1978), p. 23. On the symbolism of city gates and their relation to the *Adventus* and *Triumph*, see pp. 10-44, esp. pp. 21-30, ‘The Roman Triumph’.

38. Smith, *Architectural Symbolism*, p. 10.

Assuming a variety of forms, monumental gates and arches typically employed between one and four openings (including the square quadrupal arch known as a quadrifrons or tetrapylon). Monumental triple arches of this period, for example, are found in the Roman Forum (erected 19 BCE), at Arles (c. 6 BCE) and Orange (Arausio, 20 CE?) in France, at Pisidian Antioch and at Ephesus (4/3 BCE). The Porta Palatina at Turin and the Porte St-André at Autun incorporate four openings in-line.

Particularly striking are triumphal arches erected either immediately in front of or at some distance from the city walls, among them those at Pola, Verona, Aosta, Orange, Minturno and Reims.<sup>39</sup> Especially where they were isolated from the actual city defenses, free-standing monumental gates asserted Roman identity and supremacy in symbolic form. Thus, even as walls and gates came to symbolize the city they embraced, free-standing, arched gateways condensed into a single monument the essential identity of a specifically Roman city: 'So by the beginning of the empire, monumental arches were already established as symbols both of Roman rule and of Roman cities; the freestanding imperial arch, set apart from other structures, was well on the way to becoming a primary urban instrument'.<sup>40</sup>

The imperial symbolism of monumental gateways suggests an explanation for the revolt that erupted, shortly before Herod's death in 4 BCE, over the large golden eagle he had placed '[above] the great gate of the Temple, as a votive offering and at great cost'.<sup>41</sup> Josephus accounts for the fateful rabbinic mandate to pull down the eagle as having been motivated by loyalty to Torah, and by an abhorrence of idolatry in general. Indeed, the political and theological symbolism both of the eagle and of its location would have been unmistakable (cf. *War* 3.123). At least in the eyes of the zealous rabbis and their students, Herod's 'votive offering' appeared to dedicate the Temple—and all who entered this particular gate—to the *genius* of Rome, thereby submitting

39. Richmond, 'Commemorative Arches and City Gates', pp. 149-52, 156, 170.

40. MacDonald, *Architecture of the Roman Empire*, II, pp. 82-84; cf. Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications*, p. 13; J.B. Ward-Perkins, *Roman Architecture* (New York: Abrams, 1977), pp. 210-17. Further examples of city gates in the form of triumphal arches are found at Asseria (Yugoslavia) and Baalbek (Lebanon).

41. *Ant.* 17.151-64; cf. *War* 1.648-55. Perhaps this is the same gate to which Josephus refers in *War* 1.416: 'So great was [Herod's] affection for this same friend Agrippa, that he engraved his name upon the gate which he erected in the Temple'.

Israel's worship to the tutelage of pagan deities.<sup>42</sup> The willingness of devout Jews to sacrifice their lives in opposing such symbols of Roman domination provides some indication of how they might also have assessed Roman-style monumental architecture.<sup>43</sup>

3. *Roman-Style City Gates in Herodian-Era Palestine.* Herod's own appreciation of the symbolic value of gateways is consistent with an apparent preference for monumental, Roman-style city gates as a mark of his reign. In 30 BCE, Caesar Augustus had returned to Herod the territories previously annexed by Cleopatra and, as a gesture of friendship, bestowed on him the cities of 'Gadara, Hippos, and Samaria, and the maritime towns of Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and Strato's Tower' (*War* 1.396; *Ant.* 15.217).<sup>44</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, wide, round-tower city gates dating from the early Roman era are in evidence in at least three, and possibly four, of these locations: Gadara, Hippos (Sussita), Samaria Sebaste and Caesarea Maritima (Herod's new designation for Strato's Tower).

Depending on how one evaluates the textual evidence, Mt. 8.28 may depict Jesus visiting the region of Gadara of the Decapolis in order—appropriately enough—to cast out demons.<sup>45</sup> Had he approached the city itself, Jesus would have encountered a free-standing, round-tower gate some 35 meters (115 ft) in overall width. Each of its towers

42. Although Josephus does not otherwise identify this 'great' gate, its direct connection to the Temple is clear (*πυλῶνος τοῦ μεγάλου τοῦ ναοῦ*, *Ant.* 17.151; cf. *War* 1.650). Richardson argues that having expended enormous effort and money 'to curry Jewish favor', Herod would hardly have risked offending religious sensibilities (*Herod*, pp. 15-18). But the events themselves, including the participants' willingness to die for their actions, and not least Josephus's reporting of the incident, all argue for the gravity of the offense.

43. The introduction of legionary standards (*War* 2.169-74; *Ant.* 18.55-59) and Caligula's plan to erect a statue of himself in the Temple (*War* 2.184-87, 192-203; *Ant.* 18.261-309) evoked similar responses, to which may be compared the refusal by certain Temple priests in the summer of 66 CE to accept offerings from non-Jews, which led to the discontinuation of sacrifices on behalf of the Roman nation and emperor, and, ultimately, 'laid the foundation of the war with the Romans' (*War* 2.409).

44. Most of these cities had been liberated from Jewish rule by Pompey in the aftermath of the latter's defeat of Jerusalem in 63 BCE (*Ant.* 14.76). Gadara and Hippos were returned to the province of Syria following Herod's death in 4 CE.

45. For discussion of the textual evidence, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, pp. 23-24.

measured approximately 11.25 meters (37 ft) in diameter: the intervening gate structure extended 12.5 meters (41 ft), with an actual opening five meters (16.4 ft) wide.<sup>46</sup> This structure has been designated the 'Tiberias Gate' on the basis of its close similarity to the free-standing round-tower gate of Tiberias (discussed below). The more modest west gate appears to consist of a simple opening in the city wall, some six meters (20 ft) wide, with an entranceway measuring 4.5 meters (14.75 ft) between jambs.<sup>47</sup>

Since the site has not been systematically excavated, the evidence from Hippos is incomplete and therefore inconclusive. Nonetheless, in his survey during June of 1885, Schumacher (who mistook the location for Gamala) found two gates in the city walls, at the western and eastern ends of the *decumanus*.<sup>48</sup> More recent examination of the surface remains confirms that the main city gate, in Hippos's east wall, was distinguished by its round-tower structure. Here, however, only one tower (the south pier, nine meters, or just under 30 feet, in diameter) is currently in evidence, while of the conjectured north pier only the foundations remain. These structures are sufficient, nonetheless, to indicate a gateway with 'a probable internal width of 3.1 m.' which, if both gate piers were of matching structure and dimensions, would yield an overall width of 21.1 meters (69 ft).<sup>49</sup> The western city gate is reported (without further elaboration) as having been 'much smaller'.

Richardson notes the absence of literary evidence for building projects by King Herod in any of 'the Decapolis cities, including Hippos and Gadara, that were under his control for a substantial part of his reign'.<sup>50</sup> But whether or not Herod himself established the gates of Gadara and Hippos, their typically Roman architecture would have clearly identified these cities as Gentile in character. The evidence is much stronger,

46. T. Weber *et al.*, 'Gadara of the Decapolis: Preliminary Report of the 1989 Season at Umm Qeis', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 34 (1990), pp. 325-26. The dimensions cited here are derived from the scale drawing in fig. 2, p. 326.

47. Weber *et al.*, 'Gadara of the Decapolis', pp. 331-32 and fig. 6.

48. G. Schumacher, *The Jaulân; Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land: Translated, by Permission, from the Transactions of the German Society* (London: Watt, 1888), pp. 194-206.

49. C. Epstein, 'Hippos (Sussita)', in Stern (ed.), *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, II, pp. 634-36. Cf. I. Anati, 'News and Notes', *IEJ* 3 (1953), p. 133.

50. Richardson, *Herod*, p. 175.

however, in the case of Herod's two grandest civic undertakings, Sebaste and Caesarea.

In 27 BCE, Herod rebuilt the ancient city of Samaria as Sebaste, adorning it with new buildings and settling there a number of non-Jewish veterans (*War* 1.403; *Ant.* 15.296-98). The most prominent of these structures was the Augusteum, a colonnaded temple complex dedicated to Roma and Augustus that crowned the western acropolis.<sup>51</sup> Immediately in front of the Augusteum, Herod built the main, west gate of the city. Erected over the remains of prior Israelite and Hellenistic gates,

the west entrance consisted of two round towers, 12 m. in diameter, placed 13.2 m. apart. Between them was a mass of masonry, rectangular in plan, with its outer face decorated with pilasters. Between these in the centre was placed a single opening, ca. 5.5 m. wide, probably arched... From the fragments of moldings, both straight and curved, with bases of antae, and small columns, found in the debris, it is clear that the gate was very elaborate in design.<sup>52</sup>

This wide city gate, measuring 37.2 meters (122 ft) across, would have formed a visual unity with the Augusteum that towered behind it, both clearly representing Herod's avowal of Roman supremacy.

Levine has noted the 'striking parallel' between the city gate and towers of Herodian Sebaste and the structure he cautiously identifies as the north gate of Herodian Caesarea Maritima. Almost identical to the West gate of Sebaste, the Caesarean gateway has paired towers 12 meters (39.4 ft) in diameter flanking a gate structure 14 meters (46 ft) wide.<sup>53</sup> Accordingly, the Caesarean gate structure extended some 38 meters (or 125 ft) in all. But whereas the defensive walls and gates of Samaria were fully functional, the walls surrounding Caesarea appear to

51. Cf. D. Barag, 'King Herod's Royal Castle at Samaria-Sebaste', *PEQ* 125 (1993), pp. 4-8.

52. G.A. Reisner, C.S. Fisher and D.G. Lyon, *Harvard Excavations at Samaria, 1908-1910* (2 vols.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), I, p. 199. The extant curtain wall, although later, is built on the Herodian foundations, on 'the same plan as the original Herodian gate... During the final period the opening was 5.2 m. wide, but it seems, judging from the traces of masonry, to have been originally somewhat wider' (p. 204).

53. The extant curtain wall remains do not, however, reveal the nature or size of the actual gate opening: see L.I. Levine, *Roman Caesarea: An Archaeological-Topographical Study* (Jerusalem: Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 12-13.

have been largely cosmetic, which may explain the paucity of wall remains uncovered to date.<sup>54</sup> This observation suggests that Herod furnished Caesarea with a gate even larger than that of Sebaste not for military reasons, but primarily for its symbolism, as a fitting embodiment of all that his civic monument to Caesar was intended to honor.<sup>55</sup>

As a final example, the south gate of Tiberias, on Galilee's western shore, demonstrates that Herod Antipas shared his father's taste in Roman gateway architecture. With round towers each seven meters (23 ft) in diameter flanking a gate opening originally five meters (16 ft) wide, the entire gate structure measures almost 24 meters (78 ft) in width.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, as was the case at Gadara, Scythopolis, and Caesarea Maritima, 'in the Roman period the gate and towers stood isolated and served as a kind of outer gate, with no relationship to the walls'.<sup>57</sup> The

54. D. Roller, 'The Wilfrid Laurier University Survey of North Eastern Caesarea Maritima', *Levant* 14 (1982), pp. 94-96. Although subsequent debate has raised the possibility that some of Caesarea's walls pre-date the Herodian era, the gate itself is typically Augustan in form; see, e.g., R. Avner, 'The City Walls of Straton's Tower: Some New Archaeological Data', *BASOR* 268 (1987), pp. 71-88; J.A. Blakey, 'The City Walls of Straton's Tower: A Stratigraphic Rejoinder', *BASOR* 273 (1989), pp. 79-82.

55. For evidence of the Roman cultus at Caesarea, see *War* 1.414, 2.266; *Ant.* 15.339; Levine, *Roman Caesarea*, pp. 18-23; L.C. Kahn, 'King Herod's Temple of Roma and Augustus at Caesarea Maritima', in A. Raban and K.G. Holum (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima: A Retrospective after Two Millennia* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), pp. 130-45; and R. Gersht, 'Representations of Deities and the Cults of Caesarea', in Raban and Holum (eds.), *Caesarea Maritima*, pp. 305-24.

56. See scale drawing: Foerster, 'Tiberias', p. 1471. The curtain wall, set back behind the projecting towers, extends 11 meters.

57. Foerster, 'Tiberias', p. 1471. Similarly, the northeast gate of Roman Scythopolis (biblical Beth Shean), dating from the second century CE, 'seems to have been a free-standing triumphal arch erected at the city entrance', not incorporated into the city wall until the Byzantine era (R. Bar-Nathan and G. Mazor, 'City Center [South] and Tel Iztabba Area; Excavations of the Antiquities Authority Expedition', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 11 [1993], p. 48). With square piers joined by a barrel-vault arch and a gate opening of 7.3 m (24 ft), the entire structure extends 22.8 m (75 ft). The city's West Gate, of similar antiquity and identified in an inscription at Tel-Rehov as 'the pyle of Zeira', marked one terminus of the Legio-Scythopolis road, but its dimensions have yet to be determined (G. Mazor and R. Bar-Nathan, 'The Bet She'an Excavation Project—1992–1994; Antiquities Authority Expedition', *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 17 [1998], pp. 26-27, 29; B. Isaac and I. Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea. I. The Legio-Scythopolis Road* [Oxford: B.A.R., 1982], p. 28 and p. 36 n. 12).

gate at Tiberias dates from the founding of the city in the second decade of the first century CE and, as indicated above, was likely adorned with votive statuary.

Although the layout of the curtain wall and entrance way varies, the double round-tower pattern of the foregoing examples is typical of Augustan-period city gate architecture. Surviving examples from Italy with round or polygonal towers include the Porta Praetoria at Como, the Porta Palatina at Turin and the Porta Aurea at Ravenna, ranging in width from 40 meters (131 ft; at Como) to more than 56 meters (184 ft; at Ravenna). Other contemporary examples can be found at Ventimiglia, Valence, Ravenna, Spello and—in a different form—at the colony of Fréjus (Forum Julii), with paired round and semi-circular towers flanking a triple entranceway to create a structure almost 70 meters (230 ft) wide.<sup>58</sup> The architectural form of the Herodian-era city gates reviewed above thus provides a clear indication that their respective builders intentionally adopted Roman patterns. This being the case, there is every reason to suppose that they also fully intended the symbolic, ideological, indeed theological overtones such gates conveyed, whether these were free-standing (Gadara, Caesarea and Tiberias) or fully functional, as at Samaria Sebaste.

It is clear from these examples (summarized in Table 1) that by any ancient standard, Roman-style monumental gates were extraordinarily wide.<sup>59</sup> That is to say, they were wider than other gates in contemporary use not built in monumental Roman style (e.g. those of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount), and their superstructures (if not their actual entrance

58. Johnson, *Late Roman Fortifications*, pp. 15-18 and figs. 4-5. The intact gate towers at Hispellum (Spello) and Turin provide a sense of scale: see Ward-Perkins, *Roman Architecture*, pls. 236, 237. Most of these structures are far larger than the better-known gates of second-century Gerasa, whose free-standing triumphal arch, for example (129/30 CE), was originally 25.25 m wide and 21.5 m in height, with a central opening of 5.71 m and flanking passageways measuring 2.66 m in width. Behind it, the matching south gate is approximately 21.25 m wide, while the city's north gate (constructed 115 CE) is 21.75 and 20.1 m wide on its outer and inner faces, respectively (see C.H. Kraeling [ed.], *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* [New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938], pp. 73-74, 117-19, 149-52 and Plan XXIII; cf. Inscriptions 56-58, pp. 401-402).

59. Richmond's characterization of the Porte de Mars at Reims as 'an enormous structure, 33.0 m. long' is instructive, considering the fact that it is not as wide as the gates of Gadara, Caesarea or Sebaste ('Commemorative Arches and City Gates', p. 170).

ways) were often wider than less important gates within the same urban complex (e.g. Gadara, Hippos). Even more interesting is the fact that by far the widest of these city gates are in three of the cities most closely associated with Herod the Great, namely, Caesarea, Samaria and Gadara. It now remains to be seen whether the image of the broad *road* might also convey Gentile, or specifically Roman, overtones.

	Gate Opening	Curtain Wall	Total Width
Caesarea Maritima	[?]	14	38
Samaria Sebaste	5.5	13.2	37.2
Gadara	5	12.5	35
Tiberias	5	11	24
Hippos	≤ 3.1	3.1	21.1
Jerusalem:			
Corinthian Gate	18?		
Shushan Gate	≤ 9.5		16.67?
Robinson's Arch	≥ 5		≤ 15.2
Triple Hulda Gate			≤ 15.2
Inner Sanctuary Gate			14.4?
Wilson's Arch			≤ 13.4
Double Hulda Gate			12.8
Western Wall Gate			~6
Barclay's Gate	5.69		
Warren's Gate	5.69		
Gennath Gate	~4		
Ashpot/Dung Gate	2.9		
Essene Gate	2.66		
Postern Gate	1.47		

Table 1. *Sample Gate Widths from Herodian/Roman Palestine (in meters)*

#### EXCURSUS: *The Gates of Jerusalem*

Notwithstanding the evangelist's evident interest in the Holy City, as well as Herod's extensive building activity there, Mt. 7.13 appears not to have in view the gates of Jerusalem's city walls or Temple precinct. The relevant archaeological data may be summarized briefly, then reviewed in light of Matthean redactional interests.

##### 1. *The City Gates of Jerusalem*

Evidence for city gates from the Second Temple period is sparse, and to some extent involves the hotly-debated issue of where Josephus's Second and Third Walls were located.<sup>60</sup> Of those assigned to the First Wall, only the Sheep Gate is mentioned in the New Testament (Jn 5.2; cf. Neh. 3.1, 12.39), but of it no physical evidence remains.<sup>61</sup> The Shushan Gate, in the eastern wall of the Temple Mount, is described below. The 'Ashpot' or Dung Gate, at the southernmost extent of the Lower City and overlooking the juncture of the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, was first uncovered by Bliss and Dickie in their survey of the First Wall between 1894 and 1897. They dated the earliest level of the gate 'at least as far back as Herod', and possibly earlier, reconstructing the partial remains to form an opening 2.9 meters (9.5 ft) in width.<sup>62</sup> Further to the west, Bliss and Dickie identified Josephus's 'Gate of the Essenes' (*War* 5.145) adjacent to the Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion, where it has recently been re-excavated by Pixner. Apparently cut through the city wall by Roman engineers in Herod's employ, the Essene gate measures exactly 2.66 meters (8.75 ft) in width, 'that is, nine standard Roman feet of 0.2957 m. or six standard Roman cubits, a cubit being 1.5 feet long'.<sup>63</sup> It was destroyed, along with the rest of Mount Zion, by the armies of Titus.<sup>64</sup> The same passage from Josephus notes that the gate 'called Gennath' marked one terminus of the Second Wall (*War* 5.146). Avigad identified this gate (dating its origin as late Hellenistic or Hasmonean) during his excavations in the Jewish Quarter. Although the scale of the illustration he provides is too large for accurate measurement, the gate appears to be some 4 meters wide, or in any event slightly narrower than the adjacent wall segment, which is 4.6 meters in

60. For a survey of the archaeological evidence concerning Jerusalem's walls in the Second Temple period, see G.J. Wightman, *The Walls of Jerusalem from the Canaanites to the Mamluks* (Mediterranean Archaeology Supplement, 4; Sydney: Meditarch, 1993), pp. 81-191.

61. On the grammar of Jn 5.2 (a gate is implied, not explicitly denoted), see J. Finegan, *The Archeology of the New Testament: The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, rev. edn, 1992), pp. 226-28.

62. Bliss and Dickie, *Excavations*, p. 89 and pl. 10, pp. 329-35; so B. Mazar, *The Mountain of the Lord* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 194-95, 208; with fuller discussion in Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, pp. 147-49.

63. B. Pixner, D. Chen and S. Margalit, 'Mount Zion: The "Gate of the Essenes" Re-excavated', *ZDPV* 105 (1989), p. 87, and fig. 4, p. 93; Pixner, 'Jerusalem's Essene Gateway', pp. 28-29. Regarding prior attempts to locate the Essene Gate, see R. Riesner, 'Josephus' "Gate of the Essenes" in Modern Discussion', *ZDPV* 105 (1989), pp. 105-109. Wightman, on the other hand, expresses doubt as to this identification (*Walls of Jerusalem*, p. 145).

64. B. Pixner, 'The History of the "Essene Gate" Area', *ZDPV* 105 (1989), pp. 98-99.

width.<sup>65</sup> Josephus's references indicate that both the Essene and Gennath gates were still in use in his day.

South of the Citadel of David and the Hippicus tower, Broshi uncovered a curtain wall (apparently part of the rebuilt western city wall) about ten meters in front of the present Ottoman wall. The section includes a gate entrance some six meters wide, flanked to the north and south by roughly-built approach walls. Pottery remains in the vicinity of masonry steps leading up to the gate suggest that the entire structure may plausibly be dated to the first century CE.<sup>66</sup>

Evidence concerning the Damascus gate, 'essentially a fortified city gate into which was set a triple-portal decorative arch', is of less certain relevance.<sup>67</sup> Not only is there ongoing debate as to whether it belonged to the Second or Third Wall, it also probably postdates Matthew's Gospel. For notwithstanding initial assessments dating this structure to the reign of Herod Agrippa (40–44 CE), subsequent, more detailed analysis favors a mid-second-century origin.<sup>68</sup> Wightman speculates that an earlier, Herodian-era gate may indeed have occupied the same location, but as a result of subsequent building activity, evidence for its existence is minimal.<sup>69</sup>

As a final example, the much-controverted Mayer-Sukenik wall to the north of the city includes a major gateway, 6.0 meters (20 ft) wide and flanked by at least one tower. However, neither the date (possibly mid- to late-first century CE?) nor the purpose of this defensive structure has yet been fully clarified.<sup>70</sup>

65. N. Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1980), p. 50 fig. 30, and p. 69. Further discussion in Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, pp. 128-31 (where the width is given as 4 m; cf. fig. 36 [p. 129]), and pp. 182-83.

66. Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, p. 140; cf. fig. 39 (p. 137) and pls. 25.2, 26.1.

67. G.J. Wightman, *The Damascus Gate, Jerusalem: Excavations by C.-M. Bennett and J.B. Hennessy at the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem, 1964–66* (Oxford: B.A.R., 1989), p. 35.

68. See J.B. Hennessy, 'Preliminary Report on Excavations at the Damascus Gate Jerusalem, 1964–6', *Levant* 2 (1970), p. 24, and the fuller analysis by Wightman, *Damascus Gate*, pp. 35-42, noting in particular the unusual layout of the towers in a style not evident elsewhere until c. 160 CE. A central portal 5.48 m (18 ft) wide and side portals of 2.36 m (7.75 ft) are set in a curtain wall extending 20 m (65.6 ft) and flanked by polygonal towers each 6 m wide, creating a structure 42 m (138 ft) in total width. Cf. M. Magen, 'Excavations at the Damascus Gate, 1979–1984', in H. Geva (ed.), *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), pp. 284-86.

69. Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, pp. 172-73 and fig. 52 (p. 169).

70. Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, pp. 163-66, with figs. 48, 49 (p. 165); and pp. 179-81.

## 2. *The Gates of the Temple*

Although Mishnah Tractate *Middoth* ('Measurements') mentions a total of five gates in the wall surrounding the Temple Mount (*m. Mid.* 1.3), there is archaeological evidence for four such gates in the western wall alone (so also Josephus, *Ant.* 15.410). The first of these, situated at the southwest corner, stood atop a stairway supported by a series of arches. Hence its maximum dimensions (15.2 m, or 50 ft) may be estimated from the remains of the topmost span, known as Robinson's arch.<sup>71</sup> Further north were the Coponius/Kiponus ('Barclay's') gate, with gateposts 5.69 meters (18.67 ft) apart, and the gate atop Wilson's arch, the latter being 13.4 meters (44 ft) wide.<sup>72</sup> The fourth, most northerly gate on the Temple's western side ('Warren's gate') is identical in size to Barclay's gate.<sup>73</sup> There was also a gate in the north wall designated by the Mishnah as the Tadi Gate (*m. Mid.* 1.3; cf. Josephus, *War* 6.222), but of it no architectural remains can be identified.

Josephus does not mention any entrances on the east side of the Temple Mount, but *m. Mid.* 1.3 indicates that a gate portraying 'the palace of Shushan' was located there (possibly the 'Beautiful Gate' of Acts 2.3, 10). The current 'Golden Gate' is 16.67 meters (54.7 ft) wide. Although of Ommayad construction, 'on either side of the great double gateway there are still in place two immense jamb stones, which probably remain from the building of Herod'.<sup>74</sup> If the Herodian jambs are original, they mark the maximum dimensions of the Second Temple period gate entrance(s) at approximately 9.5 meters (31 ft).<sup>75</sup> In addition, still visible on the south-east corner of the retaining wall, immediately south of the 'straight joint', are the remains of a double gate atop an arch that corresponds to Robinson's arch on the opposite side of the Temple Mount.<sup>76</sup> While this gate's original contours can no longer be established

71. Alternatively, R. Grafman's observations yield a measurement of 15.50 m ('Herod's Foot and Robinson's Arch', *IEJ* 20 [1970], p. 61 and n. 5). Ben-Dov notes that while calculations based on fragments of moldings from the gateposts and lintel of Robinson's arch indicate a gateway 5 m wide, there is no way of knowing whether this was the sole entrance, or one element of a double or triple gate (*Shadow of the Temple*, p. 144).

72. Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, pp. 133-34, 217; Ben-Dov, *Shadow of the Temple*, p. 122, 140; D.M. Jacobson and S. Gibson, 'The Original Form of Barclay's Gate', *PEQ* 129 (1997), p. 138.

73. Jacobson and Gibson, 'Barclay's Gate', p. 145.

74. Finegan, *Archeology*, p. 210. Arguing for the antiquity of the current location, an accidental discovery in 1969 revealed the existence of another gate, apparently constructed of pre-Herodian masonry, immediately beneath the foundations of the present one: J. Fleming, 'The Undiscovered Gate beneath Jerusalem's Golden Gate', *BARev* 9.1 (1983), pp. 24-37.

75. Scale drawings in A. Sharon, *Planning Jerusalem: The Old City and its Environs* (Jerusalem: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973), pp. 65, 67.

76. K. and L. Ritmeyer, 'Reconstructing Herod's Temple Mount', *BARev* 15.6 (1989), p. 41; Ben-Dov, *Shadow of the Temple*, pp. 115-16, 144-45.

with certainty, the size of the arch spring and placement of the surrounding ashlar suggest a maximum width of roughly 6 meters (20 ft).

According to *m. Mid.* 1.3 and 2.2, primary access to the Temple precincts was provided by the two Hulda gates 'in the middle' of the south wall. In their present form, the more westerly of these is a double gate 12.8 meters (42 ft) wide, while its eastern counterpart is a triple gate some 15.2 meters (50 ft) in width. Both are thought to correspond in size to their Herodian foundations.<sup>77</sup> Although their respective functions are much-debated, the triple gate (accessed via a staircase the same width as the gate itself) may have served as the entrance for worshipers and the double gate as an exit, the latter with a staircase 65 meters (213 ft) wide to facilitate egress.<sup>78</sup>

Several factors make it tempting to identify the eastern Hulda Gate as that which Matthew had in mind. If indeed it served as the main Temple entrance, Jesus' prohibition against entering the 'wide gate' could be seen as anticipating the destruction of the Temple (cf. 23.37–24.2), and thereby buttress Matthean perspectives on theological reconstruction (e.g. 18.20).<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, in keeping with the reference to a 'broad way', both Hulda gates faced a plaza 13 meters wide, to the south of the Temple mount. This plaza opened off the main north-south thoroughfare of the city, itself at least 10 meters (32.8 ft) wide and running parallel to the Temple's western wall.<sup>80</sup> Even more tantalizing is the suggestion that remains of an inscription found in the area of the stairway leading to the Double gate corresponds to the note in *m. Sanh.* 11.2 that the Sanhedrin used to meet 'at the gate of the Temple Mount'.<sup>81</sup> Might the reference to the 'wide gate' thus constitute a subtle polemic against the 'tradition of the elders' (cf. Mt. 5.2, 15.1-9, etc.)?

Attractive as these suggestions might appear, they are unlikely for the simple reason that the Hulda gates were probably no wider (at 12.8 and 15.2 m) than other Temple precinct entrances, whether Wilson's arch (13.4 m), Robinson's arch (15.2

77. Finegan, *Archeology*, p. 207; K. and L. Ritmeyer, 'Reconstructing the Triple Gate', *BARev* 15.6 (1989), pp. 49-51. However, evidence of a stone lining (a kind of door-frame) in the eastern gate suggests the same for its western counterpart, reducing the width of the latter accordingly: 'liners...could have been up to forty centimeters thick without making the doorways unduly narrow' (S. Corbett, 'Some Observations on the Gateways to the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem', *PEQ* [1952], pp. 8-9).

78. Ben-Dov, *Shadow of the Temple*, p. 113.

79. See further, M. Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel: The Rejected-Prophet Motif in Matthean Redaction* (JSNTSup, 68; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 286-88, 318-23.

80. Ben-Dov, *Shadow of the Temple*, pp. 108, 113. Avigad, who records a different section of the thoroughfare 13 m wide, takes this street as evidence of the decision by Herod Agrippa II to re-pave the streets of Jerusalem (Josephus, *Ant.* 20.222; Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, pp. 88, 94). Cf. Mazar, 'Herodian Jerusalem', pp. 234-37 (measuring the width as 12.5 m).

81. So Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, pp. 147-48; *idem*, 'Herodian Jerusalem', p. 236.

m) or the Shushan gate (9.5/16.67? m). Only Barclay's and Warren's gates (at 5.69 m.) are significantly narrower. Although *m. Mid.* 1.3 indicates that the Kiponus (Barclay's) gate also provided access to the Temple precincts, there is nothing to suggest that it has any bearing on Mt. 7.13-14.

Nor does the 'wide gate' of Mt. 7.13 likely refer to an entrance within the Temple precincts. *Middoth* indicates that there were either seven (*m. Mid.* 1.4) or thirteen gates (*m. Mid.* 2.6) opening into the Temple courts, measuring ten cubits in width (about 4.5 m [15 ft]) and twenty in height (*m. Mid.* 2.3).<sup>82</sup> Josephus mentions ten gates with double doors leading to the inner courts.<sup>83</sup> By his account, their doors were each 'thirty cubits in height and fifteen in breadth', for a total width of about 13.5 meters per gate (44 ft; *War* 5.202). Alternatively, *Apion* 2.119 refers to gates 20 cubits wide by 60 high (9 m by 27 m [30 ft by 89 ft]). By comparison (although its precise identity and location are much debated), the Corinthian Gate opposite the sanctuary is said to have been 'far larger', measuring fifty cubits in height, 'with doors of forty cubits (τεσσαρακονταπήχεις τὰς θύρας)' (*War* 5.204-205). If this measurement specifies the combined width of both doors (the wording is ambiguous), the gate opening would have been 18 meters (60 ft) wide.

The portal providing initial access to the Sanctuary, says Josephus, was 25 cubits wide and 70 high (about 11 m by 31.5 m [37.5 ft by 105 ft]: *War* 5.208). Whereas this portal lacked doors, an inner gate was furnished with 'golden doors 55 cubits high and 16 broad' (*War* 5.211). Assuming double doors, the entrance to the sanctuary could have been 14.4 meters (48 ft) in width. The Talmud concurs that the

82. Determining the exact length of a cubit is extraordinarily difficult (see M.A. Powell, 'Weights and Measures', *ABD*, VI, pp. 899a-901a; O.R. Sellers, 'Weights and Measures', *IDB*, IV, pp. 836b-38a, and respective bibliographies). At least two such measures were in use throughout the Second Temple period: *m. Kel.* 17.9-10. The Siloam Tunnel inscription, which describes the shaft as '1200 cubits in length' (*ANET*, p. 321), provides one objective standard. As measured by Vincent, the tunnel is 1749 feet in length, yielding a cubit of 17.49 inches (1.4575 ft), or 44.42 cm (Finegan, *Archeology*, p. xxx). But whether a measurement from the time of Hezekiah (itself only approximate) remains valid in Herod's day is not certain. Arguing for just such a consistency, A. Kaufmann proposes calculations of 43.7 and 44.6 cm on the basis of archaeological evidence from the Temple Mount ('Determining the Length of the Medium Cubit', *PEQ* 116 [1984], pp. 120-32). The cubit is estimated here as being approximately 45 cm or 18 inches in length, with discussion of alternative opinions where relevant. Conversions from metric to imperial measurements are approximate.

83. Ben-Dov suggests that the Temple's many double gates represent 'an exception to the rule in classical architecture' (*Shadow of the Temple*, p. 138). Roman 'urban archways usually have from one to four ground-level openings, with one and three the most common' (MacDonald, *Architecture of the Roman Empire*, II, p. 80). The second-century CE Porta Nigra at Trier provides a rare example of a double Roman portal.

entrance to the sanctuary was secured by two sets of double doors, but gives their dimensions as 20 cubits in height by 10 cubits wide (9 m by 4.5 m [30 ft by 15 ft]: *m. Mid.* 4.1).

However one accounts for the many disagreements between these various figures, only the Corinthian gate (possibly 18 m) is appreciably wider than others elsewhere in the Temple complex. Yet even taking Matthew's post-destruction perspective into account, it makes little sense theologically to imagine the evangelist (or Jesus) counseling avoidance of 'wide' sanctuary gates and all that they represent, given the positive estimation of the Temple and its worship earlier in the Sermon on the Mount (5.23-24, 35; cf. 23.16-22). Nor can any contrast be drawn between the extant gates of Jerusalem (1.47-4 m) and those of the Temple Mount (5.69-16.67? m) or Sanctuary (4.5?-18? m), if only because for Matthew the city and Temple are theologically identical (Mt. 5.35; 23.37-24.2).

### 3. *Roads in Ancient Israel and Early Roman Palestine*<sup>84</sup>

Two international transportation routes traversed the lands of the Bible. The 'Great Trunk Road' ran from Memphis, in Lower Egypt, northeast via Gaza and Megiddo to Byblos, Ugarit and Antioch, thence east and south along the Euphrates to the Persian Gulf. The 'King's Highway' followed an inland route north from Ezion-geber on the Red Sea through Petra and Amman to Damascus and, eventually, Ebla and Aleppo. The two were joined by a third route (the 'Way of the Sea', Isa. 9.1) that proceeded from Megiddo via Hazor (or, alternatively, Beth Shean) to Damascus. The main regional road in ancient Israel followed the spine of the Judean hills from Beersheba through Hebron and Bethlehem to Jerusalem, thence north to Bethel, Shechem and, ultimately, Beth Shean. In addition, a complex series of secondary routes ran east-west, linking the two international arteries and the 'National Highway' at various points.<sup>85</sup> But as Beitzel notes, 'even a remnant of a paved road or highway connecting ANE towns is practically unknown before the Roman era'.<sup>86</sup> Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the 'Great

84. For methodological issues concerning evidence of ancient road systems, see B.J. Beitzel, 'Roads and Highways', *ABD*, V, pp. 776b-78a, and, more fully, D. Dorsey, *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), pp. 52-56.

85. For a full description of these various routes, see Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, *passim*.

86. Beitzel, 'Roads and Highways', p. 776b. Similarly, with regard to earlier periods, Dorsey notes that various excavations (e.g. at Tell Deir Alla, Ashdon, Gezer,

Trunk Road' and 'King's Highway' provided transportation across ancient Israel for countless armies of invasion and conquest, even these vital links would have required frequent maintenance and repair, not least due to the ravages inflicted by seasonal rainfall.<sup>87</sup>

a. *Roman Roads of the First Century CE*

According to currently available evidence, it was not until the Roman era (more precisely, not until just prior to the first Jewish War) that any significant improvements to the national transportation system were undertaken. The first such project for which archaeological evidence remains is the paving of a coastal route between Antioch and Ptolemais, the milestones for which are dated 56 CE. Its purpose was primarily military, occasioned at least in part by the need to intervene in conflicts between local Jewish and Samaritan populations.<sup>88</sup> The outbreak of the First Jewish Revolt ten years later spurred a more systematic campaign of road construction, described in detail by Josephus. In order to transport not only the large numbers of foot soldiers, but also heavy battering rams and catapults, Roman engineers undertook both to improve existing roads and to build entirely new ones. According to Josephus, the army with which Vespasian set out from Ptolemais included units whose task was 'to straighten out bends in the highway, level rough surfaces and cut down obstructive woods, so that the army

Megiddo and Dan) provide evidence of the paving of streets within cities. Yet since 'no paved open road dating from the Iron Age or earlier has ever been discovered in Israel or elsewhere in the Ancient Near East', and written sources consistently indicate them to be unpaved, 'the evidence suggests that the open roads of the period were never paved' (*Roads and Highways*, pp. 26-27).

87. Josephus's explanatory comment—presumably based on his own experience—as he recounts the story from Gen. 24 of the quest for Rebecca, is *à propos*: 'The servant's journey was prolonged because travel is rendered difficult in Mesopotamia, in winter by the depth of mud, and in summer by the drought' (*Ant.* 1.244).

88. See Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea*, I, pp. 8-9; D.F. Graf, B. Isaac and I. Roll, 'Roman Roads', *ABD*, V, p. 785b. On Roman road construction generally, see R.J. Forbes, *Notes on the History of Ancient Roads and their Construction* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche, 1934), pp. 131-51; L. Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: G. Allen, 1974), pp. 163-69; R. Chevallier, *Roman Roads* (trans. N.H. Field; London: Batsford, 1976), pp. 82-84, 86-93.

would not be exhausted by laborious marching' (*War* 3.118).<sup>89</sup> He notes, moreover, that the inclusion of road-building brigades was 'standard practice' for the Romans (*War* 3.115), and goes on to describe how on the approach to the Galilean stronghold of Jotapata in the summer of 67 CE, Vespasian 'sent infantry and cavalry ahead to level the road, which was [a] stony mountain track, difficult for infantry and for cavalry quite impossible. They took only four days to complete their task, opening a broad highway (πλατεῖαν...λεωφόρον) for the army' (*War* 3.141-42).

In 69 CE, the army of M. Ulpius Traianus (father of the future emperor), stationed in northern Judea, constructed a strategic link between Caesarea and Scythopolis, as indicated by a single extant milestone.<sup>90</sup> There is no further evidence, however—at least in the form of milestones—marking Roman road construction within Judea until 120 CE, well beyond the date usually assigned to Matthew's Gospel. But it would be fair to assume that, with the Tenth Legion garrisoned at Jerusalem in the aftermath of the Jewish defeat, maintenance of the road system would have remained a strategic military priority.<sup>91</sup> To summarize, it appears not only that the Romans were the first to introduce new roads and building techniques to the region, but also that the only significant period of road building in first-century Judea was initiated in connection with the first Jewish War, an event of demonstrable Matthean interest. But is there also evidence that Roman roads in Judea were generally wider than those of local origin?

#### b. *Comparative Road Widths in Early Roman Palestine*

Any attempt at accurate comparison is hindered by the nature of the evidence, since no archaeological remains of pre-Roman roads have yet been uncovered. But comparative evidence is available from elsewhere

89. Two scenes on Trajan's column in Rome depict soldiers performing these exact tasks: see illustrations in I. Roll, 'The Roman Road System in Judea', in L.I. Levine (ed.), *The Jerusalem Cathedra: Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography, and Ethnography of the Land of Israel* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute; Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), III, p. 156; or, electronically, at <<http://cheiron.mcmaster.ca/~trajan/>>.

90. See B. Isaac and I. Roll, 'A Roman Milestone of A.D. 69 from Judaea: The Elder Trajan and Vespasian', *JRS* 66 (1976), pp. 15-19; cf. Isaac and Roll, *Roman Roads in Judaea*, I, p. 91.

91. Roll, 'Roman Road System', pp. 141-42, 153-57.

in the ancient world. For example, the average width of unpaved, single-lane ‘rut roads’, common throughout classical Greece, was about 1.8 meters (6 ft); that of the less common two-lane roads, about 3.5 meters (11.5 ft).<sup>92</sup> More generally, ‘roads in ancient countries other than Israel mostly ranged in width from one lane to three lanes, with two-lane roads of 3–4 meters being the most common’.<sup>93</sup> Within Israel, some estimate of earlier road widths can be obtained on the basis of the average width of Iron Age carts and chariots, which was 1.5 to 1.75 meters (4.9–5.75 ft). Accordingly, ‘an average one-lane road in Israel would have needed to be 1.5–2 meters to accommodate vehicular traffic; a two-lane road, from 3 to 4 meters’.<sup>94</sup>

In the Mishnah, an opinion attributed to Eliezer b. Hyrcanus (late first century CE) assigns public roads a standard width of 16 cubits (*m. B. Qam.* 6.4). Similarly, according to *m. B. Bat.* 6.7, the width of a private road for purposes of compensation is four cubits, that of a public road, 16 cubits.<sup>95</sup> The Babylonian Talmud expands as follows: ‘Our rabbis taught: A private road is four cubits; a road from one town to another is eight cubits; a public road is sixteen cubits; and the road to the cities of refuge is thirty-two cubits’ (*b. B. Bat.* 100a, b). The use of the latter passage for historical purposes is, of course, highly problematic. Not only are there the usual difficulties of attribution and dating associated with rabbinic materials, but the text itself explains that the width of the road to a city of refuge is derived exegetically from Deut. 19.3.<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, the fact that these measurements indicate an interest in symmetry (4:8:16:32) does not necessarily vitiate them historically since, as Broshi has shown, the use of symmetrical multiples of measurement was typical at least for urban streets and thoroughfares of the period.<sup>97</sup>

92. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, pp. 18, 24.

93. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, p. 19.

94. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, p. 23.

95. According to the Mishnah, the building of roads was the King’s prerogative, one that included the right to encroach on private property without penalty or redress (*m. Sanh.* 2.4). Maintaining such roads, on the other hand, was a matter of religious concern, undertaken annually to afford pilgrims access to Jerusalem (*m. Šeqal.* 1.1; cf. *m. M. Qat.* 1.2, *m. Soṭ.* 8.2). On these and related texts, see Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, p. 32; Sperber, *City in Roman Palestine*, pp. 110-11.

96. Cf. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, p. 20.

97. M. Broshi, ‘Standards of Street Widths in the Roman-Byzantine Period’, *IEJ* 27 (1977), pp. 232-35. The *cardo maximus* of Roman Jerusalem was 22 m (72 ft) wide, as were those of Gerasa, Samaria and Palmyra. Other main arteries were found

Since these passages concur in attributing a Tannaitic origin to the measurement of 16 cubits (and possibly also that of four cubits), we may take them—albeit tentatively—to have some bearing on the first century CE. Thus a cubit of approximately 45 cm yields widths of 1.8 and 7.2 meters (or 6 and 24 ft) for roads of four and 16 cubits, respectively.<sup>98</sup>

To these measurements may be compared the more accessible and frequent evidence of roads in the Roman empire: 'Major Roman highways often attained widths of up to 12 meters, while less important roads averaged 3.6 to 4.8 meters. The minimum width allowed by the Romans for a two-lane road was 2.4 meters.'<sup>99</sup> Even more detailed archaeological evidence is available for Roman Palestine. Dorsey cites the results of a series of archaeological surveys that measured road segments from Judea and Samaria, the Jordan and Beth Shean valleys, the region of Jerusalem, and the Sinai. Of the 17 road measurements obtained, the narrowest was 3.5 meters (11.5 ft) and the widest 12 meters (39.4 ft), yielding an overall average width of 5.9 meters (19.4 ft).<sup>100</sup> In other words, all of the segments in question match the average Roman width and amply exceed the minimum decreed width of 2.4 meters (7.9 ft) for a two-lane road.

We are now in a position to summarize the minimum, average and maximum envisaged widths in the various areas surveyed. Table 2 omits

to measure 11 m (36 ft), while the standard width of side streets in Jerusalem and Gerasa during the Roman-Byzantine period was 5.4 m (18 ft). These remains, most of which date to the early second century CE at the earliest, suggest a fixed ratio of 18, 36, and 72 feet for street widths. Yet excavations at Syrian Dura-Europos dating 'as early as the Seleucid period' (i.e. first century BCE at the latest) reveal 'a similar ratio of 18:24:36 feet...although the length of the foot was different'. Broshi concludes that 'a system of street standards existed in the Near East for a long period, though naturally the standard was only used in planned cities and where the terrain allowed regularity'.

98. Sperber, on the other hand, assumes a cubit of considerably greater length (70 cm, or about 27.5 in.), which yields road widths of 2.8 and 11.2 m, respectively (*City in Roman Palestine*, p. 103). Even though Sperber's cubit exceeds the upper limits of most current estimates, it still produces a maximum Mishnaic calculation that is less than the 12-meter width of the largest Roman road. In any event, the discrepancy between Roman and Tannaitic standards leads him to suggest that the latter texts 'should be interpreted as largely theoretical' (p. 104).

99. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, p. 19.

100. Dorsey, *Roads and Highways*, pp. 19-20, whose calculations should be accorded greater weight than the less comprehensive evidence cited by Sperber, *City in Roman Palestine*, p. 103.

the clearly fanciful calculation of the road to the cities of refuge and postulates the Talmudic standard for an inter-city road to be an average width in that category:

	Minimum	Average	Maximum
Classical/Hellenistic Greece	1.8	3–4	
Iron Age Israel	1.5–2	3–4	
Mishnah	1.8	[3.6?]	7.2
Roman Empire	2.4	3.6–4.8	12
Roman Palestine	3.5	5.9	12

Table 2. *Average Road Widths in the Greco-Roman World (in meters)*

It must be acknowledged from the outset that the data presented here are incomplete. But these figures do provide a rough basis for comparison and suggest the following observations. First, the Romans built roads that were, on average, wider than those of the Greeks. Secondly, Roman roads in Palestine appear to have been wider than was generally the case elsewhere in the Empire. This may, however, be due to the smaller size of the sample from within Palestine, when compared with more abundant evidence originating elsewhere. Thirdly, whereas the widest road envisioned by Mishnaic legislation is 7.2 meters, Roman roads in Palestine attain widths of up to 12 meters. And, fourthly, if the Talmudic calculation of 3.6 meters (or eight cubits) for an inter-city thoroughfare has any historical validity, that figure is at the low end of the average width of local Roman roads throughout the Empire, and considerably lower than the actual average width of 5.9 meters for Roman roads in Palestine. In the case of the final two observations, it is important to keep in mind that the framers of the Mishnah would have been familiar with Roman roads through daily experience. At least if we have estimated their cubit correctly, *they* are of the opinion that Jewish builders constructed roads that were considerably narrower than those of their Roman counterparts. Indeed, Roman roads were wider than those of ancient Greece, ancient Israel, the Hellenistic period or Jewish legislation. No wonder, then, that Josephus remarks on the Roman ability to turn a ‘stony mountain track’ into a ‘broad highway’.

No less so than wide gates, broad inter-city roads thus typify—indeed, symbolize—the presence and pervasive influence of Rome in Judea during the latter half of the first century CE. Whereas monumental, Roman-style city gates date from the reign of Herod the Great onward,

broad Roman roads make their first appearance as Jewish revolt begins to loom. Yet this too is consistent with our reading of Mt. 7.13-14, which explicitly states, 'wide is the gate and spacious the road that *leads to destruction* (εἰς τὴν ἀπώλειαν), and there are many who enter it'.

On historical grounds, then, fortifications and roadways alike are of immediate relevance to the period of this Gospel's composition. Matthew writes in the immediate aftermath of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple. Indeed, the evangelist consciously juxtaposes the cataclysmic events of the war against Rome with the ministry of Jesus, interpreting each in light of the other.<sup>101</sup> Historical and theological interests thus combine to suggest an appropriate backdrop for interpreting Mt. 7.13-14, against which ἀπώλεια would connote not only 'destruction' in general, but also the destruction of Jerusalem in particular.<sup>102</sup>

Viewed in light of the symbolic value of wide gates and broad Roman roads, the initial injunction in the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount may therefore be read in a manner similar to the less metaphorical instructions of Mt. 10.5:

Enter through the narrow gate [*narrow like the exacting demands of Jesus*];  
 for wide is the gate [*like those of Herodian/Roman/Gentile cities*]  
 and spacious the road [*like those the Romans build*]  
 that leads to destruction [*like the destruction of Jerusalem*],  
 and there are many who enter it...

#### d. *Matthew 7.13-14 in the Context of the Gospel*

This proposal raises a further question with respect to literary and theological context: Does Matthew's Gospel elsewhere discourage engagement with Gentiles and their 'ways' in general, or those of the Romans in particular? Whatever its historical value, the traditional association of this Gospel with a repentant tax-farmer (Mt. 9.9) coheres, at least, with its consistent characterization of tax collectors as sinners and social outcasts (5.46; 9.10-13 [= Mk 2.15-17]; 11.19 [= Q 7.34];

101. See Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew's Gospel*, pp. 265-89, 308-10.

102. Although Matthew's only other use of ἀπώλεια (26.8, from Mk 14.4) refers to the 'waste' of ointment, he employs the cognate ἀπόλλυμι in reference both to individual destiny (10.28 + Lk. 12.5; 10.39 // Lk. 17.33; 16.25 // Mk 8.35) and to the destruction of Jerusalem (22.7 [+ Lk. 14.21?]). Cf. Denaux, 'Der Spruch von den zwei Wegen', p. 321 and n. 51.

21.31-32 [cf. Lk. 7.29]). By the same token, ‘Gentiles’ are for Matthew the objects of divine favor (4.15; 12.18-21; 21.43?; 24.14; 28.19) precisely because of their negative social status (5.47; 6.7, 32; 18.17; 20.25) and their role as opponents of Jesus and the disciples (10.5, 18; 20.19; 24.9). As prime historical examples of accommodation to and collaboration with Gentile powers, Herods and Herodians are particularly vilified.<sup>103</sup> Herod the Great is Jesus’ first lethal enemy (2.1-18); one son, Archelaus, is deemed equally dangerous (2.21), while another, Antipas, proves his worth by murdering John the Baptist (14.1-11). The ‘Herodians’ (presumably Antipas’s servants or supporters) make a cameo appearance in a scheme to entrap Jesus over the question—fittingly—of paying taxes to Caesar (22.15-22 // Mk 12.13-17). These examples alone cast the ‘Roman option’ in a decidedly negative light.<sup>104</sup>

More direct evidence of Matthew’s attitude toward the Roman powers appears in his use of Latin loan words. Winter argued that Mark’s use of the Latin loan word λεγιών (‘legion’) in Mk 5.9 and 15 was meant to imply the spiritual uncleanness of the Roman forces, all the more so since the symbol of the Tenth Legion, stationed in Judea, was a boar’s head.<sup>105</sup> A similar logic applies to Matthew’s use of Latinisms, by which he evokes specifically Roman practices and institutions in order to enjoin—albeit indirectly—specific responses to Roman authority.

Four passages (three of them unique to Matthew), all hinging on Latin loan words, propose a sort of quietism or disengagement. To the extent that the characters in this Gospel may be taken as examples of appropriate conduct, Matthew encourages neither armed opposition nor the currying of favor. The appropriateness of this ‘middle way’ is suggested by the presence both of a former collaborator (‘Matthew the

103. On Herod and Archelaus as representative of Roman power in Matthew’s Gospel, see N.A. Beck, *Anti-Roman Cryptograms in the New Testament: Symbolic Messages of Hope and Liberation* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), pp. 114-15.

104. Similarly, Jesus rejects ‘all the kingdoms of this world and their splendor’ (Mt. 4.8), which would include Rome as the foremost world power of the day. But Matthew’s depiction of representative *responses* to Roman power must be distinguished from his portrayals of the Romans themselves. The latter combine, on the one hand, the faith of the centurion with the ailing servant (Mt. 8.5-13 // Lk. 7.1-10) and the confession of the centurion at the cross (Mt. 27.54 // Mk 15.39) with, on the other, Jesus’ prediction that he will suffer death at the hands of *Gentiles* (Mt. 20.19 // Mk 10.33) and the cruelty of Pilate’s soldiers in the praetorium (Mt. 27.27-31 // Mk 15.16-20).

105. P. Winter, *On the Trial of Jesus* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1961), p. 129.

tax collector', 10.3) and of a former revolutionary ('Simon the Cananaean' [= Zealot, Revolutionary], 10.4) among the Twelve. The evangelist appears to favor *détente*, in the conviction that Jesus, rather than Caesar, is the true κύριος ('Lord').

Thus in Mt. 5.41 Jesus instructs the disciples, 'if any one forces you to go one mile (ἀγγαρεύσει μίλιον ἕν), go with him two'.<sup>106</sup> The passage's Latinate vocabulary specifically identifies this as Roman forced labor (Latin *angareia*, *angariare*) over a Roman mile (*milion*).<sup>107</sup> Jesus counsels cooperation rather than resistance, the latter being the typical Zealot response.<sup>108</sup> Such an attitude is exemplified in the Passion account by Simon the Cyrenian, impressed by Roman soldiers into temporary service, with Mt. 27.32 again employing the verb ἀγγαρεύειν (from Mk 15.21). Note that Simon is depicted as accepting his burden without complaint. But lest cooperation be construed as submission, Jesus' discussion of the half-shekel ('didrachma') Temple tax indicates the opposite. In this passage, a question of religious observance serves primarily to clarify Jesus'—and the disciples'—theological identity: as 'sons of God', they are free from such obligations, and only comply 'so as not to give offense' (Mt. 17.26-27).<sup>109</sup> Jesus makes his argument, however, by analogy: 'From whom do the kings of the earth take tax [τέλη] or tribute [κῆνσον]?' (17.25). The latter term, reflecting the Latin *census*, indicates that specifically Roman taxation is in view.<sup>110</sup>

106. On the possibility that this Matthean text originates in Q, see the summary of discussion in J. Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels: Synopsis, Critical Notes and Concordance* (FFNT; Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1988), p. 30.

107. On forms of compulsory service and forcible acquisition in the Roman world, see, e.g., S.R. Llewelyn (ed.), *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*. VII. *A Review of Greek Inscriptions and Papyri Published in 1982–83* (Sydney, Australia: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, 1994), pp. 59-87, 93-105, 130-62.

108. Schweizer suggests that this text draws its inspiration from rejection of zealotism on the part of Q (*Matthew*, p. 130), but the text—and the redactional intent—are Matthean.

109. Like Jesus himself (Mt. 11.27; 14.33; 16.16; 27.54; etc.), the disciples are 'sons' of the true God (Mt. 5.9, 45; cf. the frequent expression, 'your Father': 5.48; 6.1, 4, 6 [*bis*], 8, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32; 7.11, etc.); so D.E. Garland, 'Matthew's Understanding of the Temple Tax', in D.R. Bauer and M.A. Powell (eds.), *Treasures New and Old: Recent Contributions to Matthean Studies* (SBL Symposium Series, 1; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), pp. 92-97.

110. The term τέλος refers to taxes on material goods, or 'customs' taxes, while κῆνσον, as at Mt. 22.17, 19, 'refers to the Roman *census*, a tax upon agricultural yield

Within the context of Jesus' ministry, the statement constitutes an ironic declaration that he and the disciples are subject to Roman taxation precisely because they are not 'sons' of the Emperor. By the time of Matthew's writing, moreover, payment of the Temple tax in particular had been diverted to the temple of Jupiter in Rome, 'as a token of the subjection of Israel's God to Rome after the failed revolt'.<sup>111</sup> The question of whether Matthew's community would have paid this tax is admittedly vexed, depending as it does on whether they—or the Roman authorities—considered Jesus' followers to be members of Israel.<sup>112</sup> But whether or not such payment was required of them, the same ironic implications remain: imposition of the tax, according to Jesus' logic, only confirms that those who pay it cannot be 'sons' of Jupiter or Rome. Again, as is also the case in Mt. 22.15-21, payment of taxes constitutes a pragmatic acknowledgment of Roman power, while simultaneously rejecting the theological claims such power might otherwise imply.

Finally, Mt. 26.52-53—another uniquely Matthean passage—provides a yet more explicit reminder of the dangers of zealotry. When an impetuous (and anonymous) disciple offers armed resistance to Jesus' arrest, the latter retorts: 'Put your sword back...for all who take the sword will perish (ἀπολοῦνται) by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions [λεγιῶνας] of angels?' The first statement is an explicit rejection of armed insurrection, with a warning of consequences that would have sounded darkly prophetic in the aftermath of 70 CE. Even more striking is the use here of the loanword 'legion' (only here in Matthew), which designates the largest organizational unit of the Roman army, consisting of 5000 soldiers or more. The army mustered by Vespasian at Ptolemais in 67 CE included three legions (*X Fretensis*, *V Macedonica* and *XV Apollinaris*); Titus added a fourth (*XII Fulminata*) upon assuming command in 70.<sup>113</sup> The entire Roman army in all theaters of operation consisted of some 25 legions at the time of

(*tributum soli*) and personal property (*tributum capitis*)' (Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III, p. 214).

111. Garland, 'Temple Tax', pp. 78-79; cf. Josephus, *War* 7.218.

112. Cf. Garland, 'Temple Tax', pp. 80-85.

113. D. Kennedy, 'Roman Army', *ABD*, V, p. 796; cf. T.R.S. Broughton, 'The Roman Army', in F.J. Foakes Jackson and K. Lake (eds.), *The Beginnings of Christianity*. Part I. *The Acts of the Apostles* (5 vols.; London: Macmillan, 1933), V, pp. 433-36.

Augustus's death in 14 CE; of 28 by the end of the first century.<sup>114</sup> These numbers provide a sense of scale: echoing the language of Roman military organization, Jesus assures his followers that *his* legions vastly outnumber those of the local Roman forces, notwithstanding (from Matthew's perspective) their subsequent and devastating victory. Thus Jesus' own acquiescence is not to be mistaken for capitulation, much less defeat.

These passages provide an appropriate context for, and thus serve to confirm, the reading proposed above for Mt. 7.13-14. 'Wide' gates and 'broad' roads, symbolic of all things generally Gentile and specifically Roman, are to be avoided.<sup>115</sup> According to Jesus, the way of discipleship is neither the way of Matthew the tax collector nor that of Simon the revolutionary. For whereas collaboration might seem 'easy' and 'pleasant', and the way of revolution beckon, Israel's recent and disastrous experience had shown how both led only to 'destruction'. In this sense, 7.13-14 conveys a historically-relevant message much like that of the parable of the two builders (Mt. 7.24-27), namely, that failure to act on Jesus' words means that when tribulation arises, one's 'house' — which includes the sense of 'Temple' — is certain to fall.

### 5. Conclusion

Once understood as conveying allusions to Rome, Mt. 7.13-14 comes into clearer focus when read in light of other 'gate' sayings such as Ps. 118.19-20, Isa. 26.2, and Jer. 22.2-3. Each of these passages contains elements of demonstrable Matthean interest, primary among them the reference to 'righteousness' (cf. Mt. 3.15; 5.6, 10, 20; 6.1, 33; 21.32). Matthew 7.13-14 is particularly reminiscent of LXX Ps. 117.19-20:

Open to me gates of righteousness [πύλας δικαιοσύνης];  
 entering through them [εἰσελθὼν ἐν αὐταῖς], I will praise the Lord.  
 This is the gate [πύλη] of the Lord;

114. Kennedy, 'Roman Army', p. 790.

115. In a proposal that correctly identifies the metaphoric value of the image but misconstrues its literal component, G.W. Buchanan suggests that wide gates and roads led in the direction of Rome itself; accordingly, 'just as the Roman roads were wide and roomy, so the Roman attitudes were broad and liberal, and many observed them' (*The Gospel of Matthew* [2 vols.; Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1996], I, pp. 347-49).

the righteous shall enter through it [δίκαιοι εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ].<sup>116</sup>

LXX Isa. 26.2 similarly describes a people characterized by righteousness entering the city gate, while Jeremiah demands that ‘the people who enter these gates’ act with justice and righteousness, refraining in particular from shedding ‘innocent blood’ (Jer. 22.2-6).<sup>117</sup> Again, the latter is a key Matthean motif.<sup>118</sup>

Viewed in light of such thematic antecedents, the ‘gate-saying’ of Mt. 7.13-14 introduces the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount by appealing for obedience to Jesus, not primarily as a matter of individual

116. The relevance of Ps. 118 to Matthew’s Gospel—and the possibility that 7.13-14 reflects traditions associated with this psalm—is suggested by three considerations. First, Ps. 118.5 juxtaposes breadth and ‘constriction’ in terms that recall the wording of Mt. 7.13-14: ‘Out of my distress [מַצַּר, from צָרַר, variously ‘to be narrow’ and ‘to afflict or persecute’, hence LXX ἐν θλίψει] I called on the LORD; the LORD answered me and set me in a broad place [מַרְחֵב; LXX εἰς πλατυσμόν]’ (for מַצַּר, cf. LXX Lam. 1.3, θλιβόντων; for מַרְחֵב, cf. LXX 2 Kgdms 22.20, Ps. 18[17].20: πλατυσμός; Ps. 31[30].9; Hos. 4.16: εὐρύχωρος). Secondly, Matthew’s parable of the sheep and the goats (Mt. 25.31-46) is strongly evocative of haggadic commentary later recorded in *Midr. Pss.* 118 §17 (243b; as noted by Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, III, p. 418, and S.T. Lachs, *A Rabbinic Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* [Hoboken, NJ: KTAV; New York: Anti-Defamation League of B’nai B’rith, 1987], pp. 394-95). Thirdly, Matthew elsewhere employs the immediately ensuing verses from Ps. 118 (vv. 22-23, 25-26) as messianic proof-texts (Mt. 21.9 // Mk 11.9-10; Mt. 21.42 // Mk 12.10-11; Mt. 23.39 // Lk. 13.35). Indeed, the original Q sequence may have juxtaposed sayings about the ‘narrow door/gate’ (Q 13.24; Mt. 7.13-14) and inclusion or exclusion from the Kingdom (Q 13.25-27, 28-30; Mt. 7.22-23, 8.11-12) with the lament over Jerusalem (Q 13.34-35; Mt. 23.37-39), which concludes with a citation from LXX Ps. 117.26 (see summary of discussion in Kloppenborg, *Q Parallels*, pp. 154-58). The related Lukan sequence (Lk. 13.22-35) also exhibits possible affinities with the interpretation proposed here for Mt. 7.13-14, linking in turn the narrow door and the threat of exclusion, a warning about Herod, and the prospect of Jerusalem’s destruction, which cites LXX Ps. 117.

Less plausibly, K. Bornhäuser proposes a Matthean allusion to the (plural, therefore wide) ‘gates’ of Ps. 118.19-20 as representative of the Torah and its extensive rabbinic interpretation, to which is contrasted Jesus’ distillation of all such teaching into the single (and in this sense, restrictive) commandment of 7.12 (*Die Bergpredigt: Versuch einer zeitgenössischen Auslegung* [BFCT, 2.7; Gütersloh, Bertelsmann, 1923], pp. 179-83).

117. The parallel to LXX Isa. 26.1-2 is noted by Mattill, “Way of Tribulation”, p. 534.

118. Knowles, *Jeremiah in Matthew’s Gospel*, pp. 72-73, 80-81.

discipleship, but with reference to the formation of the people of God.<sup>119</sup> Like the mission mandate of 10.5-6, Jesus' exhortation implicitly defines the community of faith in contradistinction to Gentile identity.<sup>120</sup> Thus the paired metaphors of gates and roads suggest that the identity of 'Israel' (for Matthew, the restored, post-destruction community) can be characterized both positively and negatively. Positively, it consists of those few who undertake the difficult, even dangerous task of doing 'the will of my Father in heaven' (Mt. 7.21). Such an alternative is rendered metaphorically by the narrow gate and the constricted way, implying strictness and, perhaps, religious purity. Defined by negation, the faithful community consists of those who in terms of political and ideological engagement avoid all that is 'non-Israel', all that is represented by broad gates and spacious roads, even though 'many' in their day have chosen the latter alternative, and paid the price for doing so.

119. In similar fashion, 1QH<sup>a</sup> 14.24-31 contrasts the 'gates of death' with the high walls and impenetrable gates of the 'fortified city' (ה[ה] עיר מצוד), founded on divine truth and justice, within which the righteous take refuge (cf. 1QH<sup>a</sup> 15.8-9).

120. Also like 10.5-6 (at least in relation to 28.19), this saying poses anew the much-controverted question of how Matthean definitions of community identity (which focus on continuity/discontinuity with Israel) relate to issues of missionary emphasis (which focus on moving beyond the ethnic bounds of Judaism).