discussing restoration of the theocratic organization, not resurrection.

JUDGMENT UPON ISRAEL IN JESUS' DAY

15 Another judgment period is brought into view when those championing resurrection for exterminated Sodomites quote Jesus' words on a certain occasion. He had reproached the unrepentant Jewish cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, which had witnessed many of his powerful works, then said: "And you, Capernaum, will you perhaps be exalted to heaven? Down to Hades you will come; because if the powerful works that took place in you had taken place in Sodom, it would have remained until this very day. Consequently I say to you people, It will be more endurable for the land of Sodom on Judgment Day than for you." (Matt. 10:14, 15; 11:20-24; Luke 10:10-15, *NW*) From this some argue that there is a future judgment, in the millennial reign, for both Sodom and these Jewish cities.

16 If we take this expression to mean that, then it would contradict Jude's statement that Sodom had already undergone the "judicial punishment of everlasting fire". Actually, Jesus was using a form of speech construction common in Biblical times. He used a similar construction when he said: "It is easier, in fact, for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God." (Luke 18:25, *NW*) No sane person would believe a camel could squeeze through a needle's eye. Yet if this obviously impossible thing were said to be easier than something else, would that not powerfully emphasize the utter impossibility of the other thing? So Jesus forcefully made the point that rich ones loath to part with their wealth would not enter the kingdom. Similarly, Sodom did not endure its judgment day, had failed completely, and the Jews knew its fate was sealed. Their opinion of Sodom was the lowest possible. So when Jesus told them that it would be more endurable for utterly depraved Sodom than for these Jewish cities they got the powerful point.

17 These Jewish cities had heard the warning and had seen powerful works; they had had their fair judgment trial and by their decision showed they were worthy of eternal destruction. (Matt. 10:5-15; Luke 10:8-12; John 12:37, *NW*) By witnessing miraculous cures performed by the power of the holy spirit and yet refusing to accept the message, the inhabitants of these cities were sinning against the holy spirit, which is the unforgivable sin meriting second death. They ranged themselves alongside the Pharisees who saw Jesus heal a demon-possessed man, but refused to accept this manifest operation of the holy spirit. Because of this Jesus told them they would never have forgiveness, neither in the present system of things nor in the next, the new world. Being judged adversely, unforgivable in both the old world and the new world, it would be useless to resurrect them in the millennium. Jesus pronounced judgment against them: "Serpents, offspring of vipers, how are you to flee from the judgment of Gehenna?" If the blind religious leaders were to land there, so were their blind Jewish followers. And when the false religious leaders converted some heathen they did not bring him into the true worship that would cleanse him of his past sins against God, but merely added to his past sins the religious sinfulness and hypocrisy which they taught him, doubling his burden of guilt. Thus the proselyte became twice as much a "subject for Gehenna" as the scribes and

15. Why do some argue for a future judgment for both Sodom and the Jews of Jesus' day?

16. What did Jesus mean when he said judgment would be more endurable for Sodom than certain Jewish cities?

17. Why would it be useless to resurrect the Jewish clergy, their Jewish followers, and their Gentile converts?

Pharisees.—Matt
33, *NW*.

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