Obadiah - Commentaries by John Nelson Darby

Christian Truth: Volume 1, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah: A Brief Outline of the Books of the Bible

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EZEKIEL

Ezekiel gives the judgment of Jerusalem—God coming from without, but all Israel looked at, and not especially Judah; the judgment of the nations around, of the ungodly oppressors in and over Israel; the dealing henceforth with individual souls as regards judgment; the setting up of David, and the new birth, as the means of Israel's blessing; the union of Judah and Israel in one stick; and, on their restoration to their land, the destruction of Gog, by divine power, in fact, by the presence of Christ; and, in the end, a vision of the restoration of the Temple and of the order of the land.

DANIEL

Daniel has two parts—the history of the Gentile empires, beginning with Nebuchadnezzar, the head of gold; and, secondly, special visions of Daniel (beginning with chapter 7) marking out the conditions and circumstances of the saints in connection with the history of these empires more fully revealed, and the coming of judgment to set them all aside in favor of Israel. But he only comes to the door of the Millennium without unfolding it.

HOSEA

We have here the rejection of the house of Israel and the house of Judah distinctively, as Lo-ruhamah and Lo-ammi; the door secretly opened to the Gentiles by it; Israel's long-enduring deprivation of everything; and then the restoration of the whole under Jehovah and David in the latter days. Paul quotes chapter 1:10 and 2:23; Peter only the latter. From chapter 4 we get the most earnest dealing with the conscience of Israel, but closing with their return in repentance to the sure blessings of Jehovah. It is the testimony of the ways of the Lord.

JOEL

Under the figure of the desolation left by a plague of insects we have announced the inroad of the northern armies in the last days, and the coming in of the whole power of man against God's people, and the consequent coming in of Jehovah to judge the whole power of man in the day of the Lord, and in the valley of decision. Meanwhile, the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon all manner of people, and the promise of certain deliverance to whoever called on the name of the Lord. You may add, the summons to repentance of all who have ears to hear.

AMOS

Amos gives the patience of God's dealings and ways, which he rehearses in connection with the precise pointing out of the iniquity Israel's ways; but marking out punishment of bordering nations on the same ground of definite moral evil. He notices the rejection of a testimony against the evil, and declares the sure, infallible, inescapable judgment of Jehovah on the whole people, the righteous remnant being as certainly saved; closing with the promise of building up the tabernacle of David, as head of the nation, and blessing the people.

OBADIAH

Obadiah is the judgment of Edom for their of hatred of Israel, warning them that the day of the Lord is upon all the heathen, while deliverance should be in Mount Zion, and thence holiness and blessing, and the kingdom be the Lord's.

JONAH

Jonah is the witness that, though God has chosen Israel, He has not given up His right as a faithful Creator in mercy over all the earth, while those that are connected with Himself must be subject to His power and bow to His grace: otherwise the sense of favor is unfaithfulness and self-exaltation. At the same time we get a type of death and resurrection as the way of blessing.

MICAH

In Micah we have the general judgment of the people, Samaria and Jerusalem, for their transgressions, iniquities, and idolatry, and their rejection of the testimony of God. Hence the whole land is treated as polluted, and no longer the rest of His people, who must arise and depart. He judges the princes and their prophets, brings in the power of the Spirit to judge even the chosen city of the Lord, but announces its re-establishment by Jehovah in grace in the last days; bringing in the siege of Jerusalem by the heathen, in fulfillment of God's counsels, though in consequence of the rejection of Christ, on account of which they were given up; and shows that the same Christ stands as their peace and defense, when the Assyrian comes in, in the last days. The remnant of Israel becomes the people of blessing to, and power over, others, while all evil in it is judged and destroyed, as well as the heathen who have come up against it. Having thus spoken of the restoration in the last days he returns and insists on the righteousness of God's ways, contrasts the attempt at ceremonially pleasing-Him with the practicing of iniquity which He hates, closing with the looking to Him to restore and feed His people as the God who passes by iniquity.

NAHUM

The power of the world, or man as such, put down forever; but with the testimony of the faithfulness of the Lord in the midst of His vengeances, and hence blessing to those that trust in Him and wait for Him. It is still the Assyrian; Babylon is another thing altogether.

HABAKKUK

Habakkuk is the soul exercised by the iniquity of God's people—first, with indignation thereat, and then with distress at their being destroyed by those who are God's rod to chasten them. He then gets the answer of God, showing that He knows the pride of the wicked, and will judge it, and that the righteous man must live by trusting in Him. Lastly, he rises above all to the glorious power of God, exercised in the salvation of His people, so that he trusts in Him, come what will.

ZEPHANIAH

In Zephaniah we get the utter judgment of the land for iniquity, hypocrisy, and idolatry, at the great day of the Lord, and of all the neighboring nations around—everything of man's natural power, Jerusalem among them, because of her iniquity, though distinctly brought out as the special object of displeasure, as connected with the Lord. The prophecy then singles out the remnant in a very distinct and definite way, calling on them to wait on the Lord, who leaves them as an afflicted and poor people but delivered by the judgments which He executes, and rests in His love over Jerusalem, making it a name and praise among all people.

HAGGAI

Haggai is occupied with the house, and declares that its latter glory will be greater than its first, at the time when He shakes all nations, and therewith encourages them to build, declaring that His Spirit went with them, as from Egypt, and that He will overthrow the throne of all kingdoms, but establish Christ under the name of Zerubbabel, as the elect man, as the signet on His right hand.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah is particularly occupied with Jerusalem, and so shows the Lord dealing with all nations, having Jerusalem as a center, using one nation to cast out another, till His purposes are accomplished; and then, when the glory has come, establishing Himself at Jerusalem. In the person of Joshua, the high priest, He justifies her against the adversary; He declares He will Come, and puts all wisdom, the omniscience of His government, in Jerusalem. He prophesies of the perfection of the administrative order in the kingdom and priesthood, and the judgment of all corrupt pretension to it, which is shown to be Babylonish, and builds the Temple of the land by means of the Branch; judging the hostile power of the world, and using all this to encourage them at that time in building the Temple. Thus far is one prophecy. (Chapters 1-4.)

In the next He takes occasion, by those who inquire whether they are yet to fast for the ruin of Jerusalem, to promise her restoration (only now, for the present, on the ground of responsibility); declares He will protect His house against all surrounding enemies; brings in Christ in humiliation, but carries it on to the time of glory, and of executing judgment by Judah upon Greece (Javan), gathering all the scattered ones. In chapters 11.14 we have the details of Christ's rejection, and the foolish and idolatrous shepherd, when He judges all the nations as meddling with Jerusalem, defends Jerusalem, brings them to repentance, and opens the fountain for their cleansing; and then we get, in contrast with the false spirit of prophecy, Christ's humiliation, the sparing "6 a remnant, when the body of the people are cut off from Judea at the end, with the final deliverance and the sanctifying of Jerusalem by the presence of the Lord, making her the center of all worship upon earth.

In chapter 13:5, we see Christ, the servant of man, the rejected One of the Jews, and the smitten of Jehovah. Read "for man possessed Me from my youth." It then appears that it was among His friends He had been wounded in His hands; and the great secret of all comes out, that He is Jehovah's fellow, and smitten of Him. Note, where Christ is owned as God, He calls the saints His fellows; and where, as here, He is in deepest humiliation, God calls Him His fellow.

In these books, Haggai and Zechariah, the Jews are never called God's people, except in prospect of the future.

MALACHI

We have here the testimony of the Jews' total failure when restored, according to what has gone before, in spite of God's electing love, which He still maintains; and then the Lord comes, sending a messenger before His face, but comes in thoroughly sifting and purifying judgment, owns the remnant who spake one to another in the fear of the Lord, in the midst of the wickedness, lifts them up, and sets them over the power of the wicked, the Sun of righteousness rising upon them for healing. But at the same time He calls them back to the law of Moses, with the promise of sending them Elijah the prophet to turn their hearts.

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