Jesus Christ in the Old Testament
(Part 4 – Jesus, The Messenger of Yahweh)

2-8-2015

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Jesus is the revealer of God:
Christ mysteriously appears in the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures:

All Old Testament references to someone seeing "God" (Elohim) or "the LORD" (Jehovah), must refer to God the Son.
Why? The reason is simple. The Bible states that no one (that is, no mortal human being) has ever seen God the Father (Ex. 33:20; Jn. 1:18, 6:46).

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him..
"explained" - εξηγεομαι (exegeomai) – We derive our term "exegesis" from this word. Exegesis is the science of un-mining the hidden gems of Scripture and leading these truths out of the Sacred Text so that we can understand the deep things of God.

Such appearances of Christ are specifically called "Christophanies" or appearances of Christ.

In an excellent book: "Christ in the Old Testament" by James A. Borland, page 33-34, it is observed that these appearances of Christ were:
1) **Actual Occurrences** (Not imaginary, hallucinatory experiences)
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I. The LORD Jesus appears at <u>the Tower of Babel</u> (Genesis 11:6-7)

Genesis 11:5
"the LORD came down" – Whenever the Lord appeared on earth, it was always a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ

v. 7 - **"Come, let Us go down"**

II. The LORD Jesus appears to <u>Hagar the Egyptian maid-servant</u> Genesis 16:1-16

"The angel of the LORD" – lit. the messenger of Yahweh. A pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ (a Christophany).
Cp. Gen. 16:7-14; 21:17-21; 22:11-18; 31:11, 13; Exod. 3:2; Jud. 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; II Sam. 24:16; Is. 63:9; Zech. 1:12; 3:1; 12:8.

"The Angel of the Lord" (Lit. "the messenger of Yahweh").
The word Angel" means messenger and does not always refer to an angelic being.
Malachi 3:1
Behold, I am going to send My messenger (malak) – (John the Baptist), and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger (malak) – (Jesus) of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts.

v. 13 - "You are a God who sees" – lit. El Roi.

III. The LORD Jesus appears to <u>the patriarch, Abraham</u>

Jesus was manifested to Abraham
John 8:56 "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

Genesis 12:7 - <u>The LORD appeared to Abram</u> and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.

Genesis 18:1-8 - An Incredible VISIT
The LORD visits Abraham's Tent

Genesis 19:24
"The LORD . . . from the LORD" – two different references to *Yahweh*. Two distinct persons are in view. The Lord <u>Jesus</u> is the first reference; God the Father is the second.

Conclusion:
Why would the LORD (JEHOVAH) make these mysterious appearances in the O.T.? Why in particular would Jesus appear throughout the O.T.?
Answer:
1. To prepare the Hebrew people for His first physical coming (i.e. His miracle birth & incarnation)
2. To prepare His people for His future return (His second coming) for judgment.

As believers, what lessons can we learn from Christ's periodic appearances in the O.T.?
1. He can be present even when we don't recognize His company.
2. We (as believers) need to live our lives with the awareness of Christ's presence!

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Introduction:

Mysterious Christophanies

Christ's pre-existence

Jesus did not begin to be at His physical conception, but literally and eternally existed in Heaven with God the Father and the Holy Spirit prior to His incarnation (taking upon Himself a physical body).

In other words, Jesus existed before His birth in Bethlehem

Proofs of Christ's pre-existence:

a. John the Baptist bore witness to Christ's pre-existence when he said, "He (Jesus) was before me" (Jn. 1:15, 30).

   NOTE: John by saying "He was before me" could not mean that Jesus had been born physically before John, because just the opposite was true. John was conceived and born six months prior to Christ's birth (Lk. 1:25). Such a statement only points to Christ's pre-existence.

b. Jesus Christ testified of His own pre-existence.

   Jesus said that He "came down from Heaven" (Jn. 6:33, 50; Note the Jew's reaction - v. 41, 42)

   Jesus said: "Abraham rejoiced to see my day" (Jn. 8:56; cp. with Gen. 17:22, 18:22, 19:27).

   Jesus said: "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jn. 8:58)

   Jesus said that He was with the Father "before the world was" (Jn. 17:5, 24).

Not only did Christ pre-exist before all living creatures, but at certain times, He chose to visibly manifest Himself (even prior to His incarnation).

Jesus is the revealer of God:

We are aware of His Virgin Birth and His incarnation:

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Hebrews 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,

John 14:9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

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Exodus 33:18-20
And he (Moses) said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.
And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.
And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
"declared" - εξηγεομαι (exegeomai) – We derive our term "exegesis" from this word. Exegesis is the science of unmining the hidden gems of Scripture and leading these truths out of the Sacred Text so that we can understand the deep things of God.

Jesus is the exegesis of God the Father. He is the One who reveals or uncovers Him.

John 6:45-46
It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.
Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father.

(NOTE: Christ's appearances in the Old Testament are important proofs of His deity)

Jesus appeared in the Old Testament as a "Theophany" or a self-manifestation of God.

Such appearances of Christ are specifically called "Christophanies" or appearances of Christ.

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I. The LORD Jesus appears at the Tower of Babel
Genesis 11:6-7

Genesis 10 describes the scattering of the nations (Noah's descents are dispersed around the world)

1. Japheth's Descendents: North (Europe & Russia) (v. 2-5)
2. Ham's Descendents: South (Canaan & Egypt) (v. 6-20)
3. Shem's Descendents: East (Persian Gulf) (v. 21-32)

What events led to the dispersion of the nations? The answer is found in Genesis chapter 11.

Man attempts Global Unity (v. 1-6)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

A. Enabled by a common channel of communication (v. 1)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

B. Supplied with sufficient material resources (v. 2-3)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

C. Motivated by humanistic pride & rebellion against God's commands (v.4)

Man's attempt to produce societal unity was…

D. Equipped with the potential for great inventions which would be used for sin (v. 5-6)

This proud attempt at Global Unity is disrupted by Jesus Christ!

Genesis 11:5

"the LORD came down" – Whenever the Lord appeared on earth, it was always a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ

v. 6

"God knows the danger of collected apostasy" (Ross, p. 246).

"Nothing will be restrained from them" – Unfortunately, due to man's sinful nature, with the accumulation of shared knowledge and resources comes the accumulation of wicked devices (Rom. 1:30 – "inventors of evil things").

With most every good invention comes an evil application of the invention.

*The printing press once used to print Bibles now prints pornography.

*The radio once used to impart news and good music, now pollutes the air waves with blasphemy, vulgarity, vanity and devilish rock and rap noise.

*The TV once used to provide wholesome entertainment now brings into our homes murder, adultery, fornication, devilish MTV, X-rated programming and a legion of other toxic shows.

*And now, most recently, the computer and the internet which has the potential of being a great help and benefit to man, will also (via the poisons flowing out of corrupt minds) be a vehicle for quick and easy access to pornography and a host of other mind-enslaving vices!

v. 7

"Come, let us go down" – Evidently with the employment of angelic spirits, the Lord (who is the author of language) would miraculously modify man's unified communication ability and instill in groups (as He saw fit) a new alphabet, phonics, grammar, and syntax.

The heart of unity (in any relationship) is communication. By striking their language, God successfully destroys their communication as a whole and thereby dismantles their proud, humanistic unity.

"It is the will of God, so long as sin is present in the world, to employ nationalism in the reduction of sin" (Stigers, commentary on Genesis, p. 129; cited by Ross, p. 234).

v. 8

"The LORD scattered them abroad" – God sovereignly determined the places the nations would be scattered to (Acts 17:26 - And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation).

Man rules, but God overrules!

God can foil man's plans anytime He wants!

And He did this in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ!

The sovereign of the universe will destroy man's future attempt at global unity when He comes back to judge the Antichrist and Satan's united kingdom in the Day of the Lord's Wrath.

II. The LORD Jesus appears to <u>Hagar the Egyptian maid-servant</u>

Genesis 16:1-16

In chapter 15 God gave a promise that Abraham would have a son (an heir). Now in chapter 16, that promise still has not come to pass; so rather than waiting on God's timing and plan, Sarah responds impulsively and devises a plan outside of God's will. A scheme of her own will. One that will bring grief and hardship.

Sarah's attempt to fulfill God's plan her way created big problems for her and for her posterity.

v.1 - "Handmaid" – Hagar was a housekeeping servant

v.3
"Sarah took matters into her own hands by giving Hagar to Abraham. Like Abraham, she had trouble believing God's promise that was apparently directed specifically toward Abraham and Sarah. Out of this lack of faith came a series of problems. This invariably happens when we take over for God, trying to make his promise come true through efforts that are not in line with his specific directions. In this case, time was the greatest test of Abraham and Sarah's willingness to let God work in their lives. Sometimes we too must simply wait. When we ask God for something and have to wait, it is a temptation to take matters into our own hands and interfere with God's plans." (Life Application Bible note, p. 32).

"Her mistress (Sarah) was despised (belittled) in her eyes" – Hagar, having become pregnant immediately, entertained feelings of superiority over Sarah, who for almost eight decades could not get pregnant.

So now, Hagar despised Sarah; that is, she viewed her lightly or with insignificance.

Hagar (the servant) was now in a position where she looked down upon her superior (Sarah).

v. 6
Sarah, filled with jealous rage, made life difficult for Hagar. She no doubt increased her tasks, giving her more work than she could handle and not with commensurate pay. Such an overbearing work load forced Hagar to run away.

v. 7
Apparently Hagar was heading south, back down to Egypt.
The hot, barren, Negev desert is no place for a runaway pregnant woman.

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Cp. Gen. 16:7-14; 21:17-21; 22:11-18; 31:11, 13; Exod. 3:2; Jud. 2:1-4; 5:23; 6:11-24; 13:3-22; II Sam. 24:16; Is. 63:9; Zech. 1:12; 3:1; 12:8.

"The Angel of the Lord" (Lit. "the messenger of Yahweh").

The word Angel" means messenger and does not always refer to an angelic being.

Hebrew:
"Messenger" (angel) = malak (Is. 42:19)
"Message" = malakuth (Hag. 1:13)

(Cp. Malachi 3:1 - John the Baptist is predicted and is called "my messenger." Jesus Christ is referred to as "The Messenger of the (New) Covenant").

Malachi 3:1
Behold, I will send my messenger (malak) – (John the Baptist), and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger (malak) – (Jesus) of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

NOTE: Jesus was called "the Messenger of Yahweh" and yet still was "Yahweh," just as He is called the "Son of God" and yet still is "God" (EX: Jn. 20:28).

NOTE: In the Old Testament, Jesus was "<u>the</u> (definite article) messenger" who fulfilled the wishes of the Father.

The New Testament references to "the angel of the Lord" are missing the definite article and should be translated "an angel of the Lord."

Example: Mt. 28:2 - KJV - "The Angel . . ."
Greek - "An angel . . ."

No New Testament reference to "the angel of the Lord" is to Jesus, but to an angel such as Gabriel (Mt. 1:20 [cp. Lk. 1:26]; Acts 5:19, 8:26, 12:7). All N.T. references to an “angel of the Lord” are not appearances of Christ, but mere angels doing the Lord’s bidding.

v. 8
Running from or ignoring a problem is not the right way to solve the problem.

Hagar’s first course of action should have been to humbly and lovingly confront Sarah face to face, rather than fleeing from her face. Then Hagar should have apologized for her prideful feelings of superiority and requested forgiveness.

Running from a problem almost never solves it.

v. 9
“Return. . . submit” – the Lord’s solution to Hagar is: Go back to the point of departure and submit to the authority from which you departed. – A good solution applicable to runaway and renegade teenagers.

v. 10
The messenger of Yahweh here identifies Himself as equal to God by claiming to have the power of God and exercising the prerogatives of God. He says, “I will multiply thy seed” – something only God can do.

Hagar knows she has come face to face with God, as evidenced by her response in verse 13.

Here the Lord Jesus promises to built a numerous people from her child. God’s promise to Abraham that he would be the “father of many nations” is being fulfilled.

v. 11
“Ishmael” – “God hears” or “Elohim listens.”

God knows what hardships we face.

Song: “Jesus knows all about our struggles”

Hagar's son would be the forefather of many Arab nations.

v. 12
"He will be a wild man" – lit. a wild donkey. A strong, untameable and undomesticated donkey.

"His hand will be against every man" – He will be aggressive, always looking for a fight, always involved in conflict.
Even to this day, many nations in the Arab world cannot get alone with anyone, not even among themselves.

"He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" – The Arab Palestinians of today who live in Israel are living proof of the faithfulness of God's prophecy. Arab and Jew still live in each other's presence, both claiming Abraham as their father and both claiming rights to the land of Canaan.

The Palestinian conflict is not something new. It all started with the conflict of Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Ishmael, the 12 sons of Jacob and the 12 sons of Ishmael.

v. 13
"Thou God seest me" – lit. El Roi.

Hagar saw Him who saw her. Jesus Christ still sees all!

EL Roi - "The Strong One Who Sees me" (Gen.16:13)
His eye is on the sparrow (Mt. 10:29-31)
See Ps. 33:18; 34:15.
Nothing escapes God's notice.
He looks with favor upon the righteous and guides them (Ps. 32:8)
El Roi watches out for us!

v. 14
“Beer-Lahai-Roi” = Well of the Living One who sees me.
Proofs that this one who met Hagar was the LORD:

He claims the prerogatives of God -- "I will multiply thy seed" (Gen. 16:10).

He is called "LORD" (Yahweh/Jehovah - this name was treated sacredly and used with honor).

He is called "God" (El) - "Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

Application: The Lord Jesus cares for Gentiles (particularly Arabs). He is the Savior of all who believe among the Gentile world!

III. The LORD Jesus appears to <u>the patriarch, Abraham</u>

Jesus was manifested to Abraham
John 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

Summary of Appearances to Abraham:

He is called "LORD" and appears in the form of a man along with two other angels (cp. 18:1, 2 with 19:1).

---He reveals omniscience -
(He, being LORD, knew Sarah "laughed within herself")
Abraham stood before the LORD (Gen. 18:22).

---He is reverently honored as King or Master (Adonai) (Gen. 18:27).

---He judged Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24)
NOTE: two persons in view - both called "LORD" (Jehovah): "The LORD (God the Son) rained down fire from the LORD (God the Father).

---He speaks as God (Gen. 22:11-12, 15, 16)
In Hebrews 6:13,14 the "Angel" speaking to Abraham is identified as God.

The "Angel of the LORD" (v.15) speaks as "LORD" (v.16) and is not quoting the Father as some might assume by the phrase - "saith the LORD."

[Note: The word "saith" means to "affirm" The phrase "saith the LORD" is never used to introduce a quote, but is always used to affirm (or emphasize) the statement that precedes the phrase. See Jeremiah 49:13 for the same sentence structure. Compare with Numbers 14:28.]

Genesis 12:7 - And **<u>the LORD appeared unto Abram</u>**, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.

Genesis 18:1-8 - An Incredible VISIT
The LORD visits Abraham's Tent

In chapter 17, the LORD made a covenant with Abraham;
now in chapter 18, He fellowships with Abraham (as evidenced by the sharing in a common meal).

It is interesting to note that the Lord always fellowships with those who are in relationship with Him (Rev. 3:20). Those who are part of the New Covenant experience close fellowship with the Lord.

v. 1
"The LORD appeared" – Whenever the Bible describes the physical or visible appearance of the LORD, it refers to an appearance of the second person of the Trinity -- Jesus Christ. Since "no [mortal] man has seen God [implied, "the Father"] at any time" (Jn. 1:18), anyone who is said to see God was seeing Jesus Christ, as did Abraham, who rejoiced to see Him (Jn. 8:56 - Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.)

"The plains of Mamre" – near Hebron (Gen. 13:18, 14:13), which was northwest of Sodom.

v. 2
"Three men stood" – As Abraham looked up, he noticed the sudden appearance of three strange visitors. Perhaps at first he didn't realize it, but he was face to face with the LORD (Yahweh) and two angels (cp. 19:1). Maybe he did entertain such angels "unawares" (Heb. 13:2).

v. 2-5
Sensing that these visitors were very honorable guests, Abraham bows to the ground (v. 2) and requests that they stay awhile (v. 3) and get refreshed (v. 4). He then prepares them a quick meal (v. 5ff).

Abraham reflects the social hospitality customs of his day. He (unlike so many of us in our fast-paced society) had the time to show hospitality. We too need to be hospitable to strangers (Rom. 12:11; Heb. 13:2).

v. 8
"And they did eat" – Can supernatural beings (who take on the form of man) eat? They did on this occasion. Perhaps this is an indication that there will be eating in Heaven even after we are glorified. For example: Jesus ate after His resurrection (Luke 24:42-43), and the New Jerusalem will have trees which will produce twelve different kinds of fruit (Rev. 22:2). Also, there is a Marriage Supper of the Lamb coming (Rev. 19:9).

v. 10
"According to the time of life" = this same time next year (Gen. 21:2 - For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him).

The Lord did visit and speak to Abraham that same year and gave him revelation concerning Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 21:12-13).

v. 13
"The LORD said" – Now, it is evident that one of the three visitors is Yahweh. Since He is LORD, He can read even the thoughts of someone like Sarah, who was hidden from view inside the tent.

--The fact that the LORD visited the earth (v. 1-12) hints at His omnipresence (he can be anywhere, and is in fact, everywhere).

--The fact that He knew Sarah's thoughts (v. 13) shows His omniscience (He knows everything).

--Now, in verse 14, the omnipotence of the LORD is implied (he is all powerful).

"Why did Sarah laugh?" – Because at this time she doubted God's promise; she did not completely believe God's Word.

She laughed for the same reason so many, if not openly, at least in their hearts laugh at some of the dogmas of Scripture.

--The evolutionist laughs at the creation account
--The feminist laughs at the role of the wife
--The atheist laughs at the evidence of God
--the fornicator laughs at God's plan for purity (doubting that God will recompense violations of His ways)

v. 14
**"Is anything too hard for the LORD?" –

Is anything too hard for the One who . . .

Spoke this universe into existence?
Dried up the Red Sea?
Fed 2 million Jews with manna?
Became incarnate, walked on water, and rose from the dead?

"I will return . . . Sarah shall have a son" – what a firm promise! A promise Sarah would, from this time on, believe.

Although Sarah initially laughed at the thought that she, an elderly woman, would give birth to a son, she afterward believed, and because of that faith in the God of the impossible, she received the power to conceive.

Hebrews 11:11 says, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised."

v. 15
We can't pull anything over on God. He is not oblivious to us. Our lives are an open book before Him (Heb. 4:13 - Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do).

Sarah now, knowing that she is known, still (out of fear) attempts to lie to the LORD.

Rather than denying the truth before the One who knows all, we should just admit the truth – rather than add sin on top of sin.

"Thou didst laugh" – This paragraph ends with the LORD not allowing Sarah to deny her laughter at God's Word.

God, however, would get the last laugh, as He would give her a son and then she would give him a name to remind everyone of the futility of laughing at God's Word. The boy would be named "Isaac" (Yishaq – he laughs).

v. 16
Having eaten a mid-afternoon fellowship meal and having announced that Abraham and Sarah would have a son, the LORD and the two angels (who took on the appearance of men) depart toward Sodom, with hospitable Abraham escorting them part of the way.

It is on this occasion that we find a passage which expresses the righteous character of God.

The Lord knew that He could entrust to Abraham revelation about His righteousness because Abraham would pass it on to his descendents.

v. 20
Just as Abel's blood cried out as it were from the ground for vengeance, so Sodom's sin cried out for judgment.

Besides the external manifestation of homosexuality (which God calls an abomination), what was the underlying sin of the people of Sodom?

Ezek. 16:49-50 – "Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good. "

The sin of Sodom:
Arrogance
Had plenty of goods (materialism)
Had plenty of time (lazy idleness)
Inconsideration of the helpless (self-centered)

v. 21
"I will go down now, and see" – The omniscient God certainly knew the condition of Sodom and Gomorrah; however, He uses anthropomorphic language to inform Abraham of His intentions.

Note: In Gen. 11:1-9, the Lord also went down to see the city of Babel before He sent judgment there and confused their languages.

The Lord knew exactly what was going on in Sodom, but would go out of His way to prove that He had all the facts before He would judge. For man's benefit, He uses terms to indicate that He will not judge unless all of the evidence is clear. For vindication purposes, the Lord will uphold the evidence, pointing to Sodom's guilt.

v. 22
"The men turned" - Actually, only those two angels would visibly enter Sodom (cp. 19:1), and the Lord Jesus would send the judgment from Heaven (19:24).

Just as God sent two angels to go inspect the condition of the people of Sodom before He sent judgment, so He wills end "two witnesses" before He pours out His wrath in the future (Rev. 11).

"Abraham stood yet before the Lord" – he stood before Jesus Christ, since no mortal man has ever seen God the Father (Jn. 1:18).

v. 27
"Lord" = Adonai – Abraham recognizes that he is standing before the Master and Ruler of the universe and recognizes his own unworthiness to even ask Him such questions.

What a privilege we creatures of dust have to commune with Adonai!

v. 30
"Oh, let not the Lord be angry" – Abraham gets more apologetic as he goes; he feels embarrassed to keep making a more stringent request than he made before.

v. 32
Why does Abraham keep whittling down the numbers? Abraham, knowing that his nephew Lot and his family were living in Sodom intercedes on their behalf (though not by name).

"Never underestimate the importance of even a small number of believers As few as ten people would have saved a whole city from destruction" (Wiersbe, p. 79).

No doubt the Lord would have destroyed NYC long ago, if it were not for a small remnant of His people who are left in this city.

An important principle is taught here:

The presence of the righteous benefits the wicked.

EX:
--Potiphar was blessed by Joseph's presence.

--The carnal church attendee finds blessing in the presence of the believers (I Cor. 5)

--The unsaved spouse is sanctified by the presence of a believer (I Cor. 7:14)

Note: Just as God delivered Noah and Lot on the same day He poured oust His judgment and wrath on the earth, so it will be at Christ's coming

Genesis 19:24

"The LORD . . . from the LORD" – two different references to *Yahweh*. Two distinct persons are in view. The Lord Jesus is the first reference; God the Father is the second.

"Brimstone and fire" – Fire and brimstone (sulfur) is God's most severe form of judgment (cp. Rev. 20:10; 21:8).

Ryrie suggests: "Possibly an earthquake occurred and lightning ignited the gases that were released, causing a rain of fire and smoke."

The details of how God accomplished the destruction of Sodom are not given. But we know this for sure:

1) The judgment fell from above. (Today, the Sodom Mountains bear evidence of a catastrophic sudden raining of sulfur and salt from above. The eerie Sodom Mountains look like something from the sky was dropped onto the earth in a moment).

2) The judgment involved sulfur, asphalt, and salt. All of which abound in that area to this day. The Dead Sea is dead due to the judgment of God. There is no place in the entire world like the Sodom Mountains of salt.

v. 25
All of the property, people, and produce of Sodom and its surrounding cities were reduced to sudden ruin, buried under millions of tons of salt.

Conclusion:

Why would the LORD (JEHOVAH) make these mysterious appearances in the O.T.? Why in particular would Jesus appear throughout the O.T.?

(And isn't it interesting that when He appears in the O.T. it is primarily to do 1 of 2 things: Either He appears to announce a birth or He appears to bring judgment on the earth.)

Why is this? Why did He periodically and temporarily appear to do these two things?

Answer:

1. To prepare the Hebrew people for His first physical coming (i.e. His miracle birth & incarnation)

2. To prepare His people for His future return (His second coming) for judgment.

It should have been no surprise to the Jewish world that Messiah would be God; and that God (Yahweh) could make visible visits to the earth--That He could make grand appearances for some great purpose.

This was sort of a Theology 101 preparing the mindset of the Hebrew world to readily accept His infleshment; His taking upon Himself flesh and blood, His virgin birth and His incarnation. And He would partake of humanity so that He could redeem humanity by His crucifixion.

As believers, what lessons can we learn from Christ's periodic appearances in the O.T.?

1. He can be present even when we don't recognize His company.

   (Now He does not make visible appearances today as He did in Bible Days when He was disclosing new revelation to the world.
   As Peter said: "whom having not seen, you love…"

   However, Christ (by His Holy Spirit) now fills all things regarding His church and where two or three are gathered together in His name, He resides in the midst of them.

2. We (as believers) need to live our lives with the awareness of Christ's presence!

   May Christ be at home in our lives. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians:
   Eph 3:17 That Christ may dwell (settle down in; be at home) in your hearts by faith;

   May we not view Him as an occasional guest, but as a permanent resident, and live in light of His presence in our lives. (There are certain things we would do and not do if we were aware of His presence in our lives).