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ASSIGNMENT on PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

1. QUESTION: Specify which , if any,words in verse Dan:7:13 are literal and which are to be understood as symbolic

Dan 7:13 King James Version
I saw in the night visions and behold one like the "Son of Man" came with the clouds of heaven and came to the Ancient of days and they brought him near before him

A The statement that Daniel saw visions from God in the night is to be taken literally, that is,John actually saw the vision as described. They were not dreams.

B. Daniel saw " one like the Son of Man ". One can take this literally for it means exactly that an individual in the form of a man appeared . The phraze however in in itself is well known to Christians in those passages in the Gospels that record Christ's identification of himself with this title and which Dr. MacRae lists in the Assignment. However Daniel was the first to use the phraze which he may have himself merely thought to be a prophet but he was much more likely because of other prophecies before his time that this was Messiah, who he described as coming "with the clouds of heaven". Should this be taken literally? It would seem so because that could be expected when coming down from heaven as Rev 19:11 ff says he will.

C "In the verse above the "Son of Man" is said to approach "the ancient of days". Here we have a descriptive phrase that cannot be easily catalogued. Judged by its literary sense it seems to be a figure of speech which metaphorically would make us think of Him whois the oldest being in the universe - the eternal God Himself. In verse 9 of the same chapter such a person is introduced as sitting on a throne so radiant that it had the appearance of "fiery flames" . Also he was ministered to by thousands of servants.
Of course a discription of God in relation to time must be understood or taken anthropomorphically ; furthermore on this level he is seen wearing a white garment with his hair "like wool" White Lamb's Wool is a description of the aged... the eternal (?)

In our attempt to decide what is literal and what is symbolic we would do well to hear his words:
"A symbol" says Vos, "is in its religious significance something that profoundly portrays certain face or principle or relationship of a spiritual nature in a visible form. The things it pictures are of present existence and present application. They are in force at th time in which the symbol operates." p144,148 Biblical Theology

Let us apply this excellent explanation of symbols to the term "Ancient of days" in Daniel 7:13 and v 9. itis no doubt symbolic of Deity and it is a forceful description for that moment , of the eternal as well as the character of fatherly. The whole verse brings in the Economical Deity rather than the Ontological Deity.(The term"Son of man" used by the Son of God later to describe himself is in this vision presented to a person whose symbol could stand for the fatherhood of God , indicating as it does elderliness ancientness to conjure up the eternal God. So by Vos's standards we have here a symbol that is "forceful for the time of the vision in which it operates.