

under discussion the natural interpretation would be that Daniel saw coming with the clouds a figure that looked like a human being.

Since so much symbolism is used in this chapter it is not at all strange that many have suggested that this is merely a symbolic picture to represent the glorification of the saints. Yet at a very early time readers of Daniel began to interpret it as meaning that Daniel saw a picture of a literal future event.

The fact that Daniel did not say that he saw "a son of man" coming with the clouds of heaven, but "one like a son of man," might suggest that he realized that this was more than a man. When the high priest demanded of Jesus: "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus answered: "Yes, it is as you say... But I say to all of you: In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64; also Mark 14:62). This reply, so strongly echoing Daniel 7:13, showed clearly that Jesus considered that verse to refer to a literal event and to represent something that was yet to occur.

As further evidence that this part of the vision depicts a literal future fact we should note the promise of the angels. After the disciples saw Jesus ascend into heaven until "a cloud hid him from their sight," two men stood by them and said: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). It would be hard to think of language that would more emphatically declare that Jesus will actually come on the clouds of heaven.

Although the vision had been mainly symbolic up to this point, it is evident that here Daniel saw a literal picture of something that would occur. However, this does not mean that everything in verse 13 was presented to him as a literal picture. Since God the Father does not have a body all representations of Him in human form are symbolic, and the statement in the last part of verse 13 that the Son of Man came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him