



American Expression E0065 As old as Methuselah

IOTS Publishing Team
International Online Teachers Society
Since 2011

The expression "As old as Methuselah" is a colloquial phrase used to describe someone or something that is incredibly old or has been in existence for a remarkably long time. It refers to Methuselah, a biblical figure known for his exceptional longevity, living to the age of 969 years.

The phrase originates from the story of Methuselah in the Book of Genesis in the Bible. According to biblical accounts, Methuselah was the son of Enoch and the grandfather of Noah. His remarkably long lifespan has made him a symbol of extreme old age.

When someone uses the expression "As old as Methuselah," they are emphasizing the ancient or timeless nature of a person, object, or concept. It serves as a metaphorical comparison to denote extraordinary longevity or enduring existence.

The phrase is often employed in a lighthearted or exaggerated manner to emphasize the long-standing nature of something. It can be used humorously to describe people who have lived for a very long time or to emphasize the longevity of objects, traditions, or institutions.

While the expression is generally used figuratively, it can also evoke a sense of awe or admiration for the enduring nature of certain elements in our world. It reflects the human fascination with the concept of time and the marvel at things that have stood the test of time.

The phrase "As old as Methuselah" can be applied to a variety of contexts. For example, it may be used to describe a historical landmark or artifact that has been in existence for centuries, or it can be used humorously to playfully exaggerate the age of someone who has lived a long life.

It is important to note that the phrase is not meant to be taken literally. Methuselah's longevity is regarded as exceptional and beyond the normal lifespan of humans. Therefore, using the expression does not imply an exact age or time frame but rather emphasizes the idea of great antiquity.

In summary, "As old as Methuselah" is a figurative expression used to describe someone or something that is extremely old or has been in existence for a remarkably long time. It draws on the biblical figure of Methuselah, known for his exceptional longevity. The phrase conveys a sense of enduring existence, remarkable age, or timeless quality. It can be used both humorously and with a sense of admiration for the enduring elements of our world.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some examples of people, objects, or traditions that you would consider "as old as Methuselah"? How do they contribute to a sense of history or continuity in your life or culture?
2. How does the expression "As old as Methuselah" reflect the human fascination with time, longevity, and the passage of years? How does the concept of extreme old age shape our understanding of the world and our place within it?
3. Can you think of instances where the phrase is used humorously or ironically? How does the exaggeration of age through the comparison to Methuselah contribute to comedic effect or playfulness in conversations or storytelling?
4. Are there any potential limitations or misunderstandings associated with using the expression? How can the figurative nature of the phrase be misinterpreted or lead to misconceptions about the actual age or longevity of something or someone?
5. How does the perception of age and longevity vary across different cultures or societies? Are there cultural factors that shape our understanding and appreciation of long-lasting traditions, institutions, or individuals? How does the phrase "As old as Methuselah" align or diverge with cultural attitudes towards aging and the passage of time?