

Ancient of Days

Descriptive Titles · Names of God

The majestic Aramaic title עתִיק יוֹמִין (Attiq Yomin), translated 'Ancient of Days,' appears uniquely in Daniel's apocalyptic night visions (Daniel 7), the same chapter revealing the succession of world empires (depicted as beasts) and their ultimate subjugation to God's eternal kingdom. Daniel beheld thrones set in place, and 'the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire' (Daniel 7:9). The imagery conveys timeless existence, absolute holiness, and judicial authority—God as the eternal Judge before whom all earthly kingdoms must give account.

The title literally means 'advanced in days' or 'aged of days,' evoking not frailty but infinite existence. God is the one 'from everlasting to everlasting' (Psalm 90:2), who preceded all creation, who witnessed all history, who outlasts all empires. The white garment and hair symbolize holiness and purity; the fiery throne, consuming judgment; the burning wheels, divine mobility and omnipresence. 'A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened' (Daniel 7:10). The scene depicts the heavenly court convened for universal judgment.

Note: The Aramaic עתִיק יוֹמִין (Attiq Yomin) combines עתִיק (attiq, 'aged, ancient, advanced') with יוֹמִין (yomin, 'days'). The phrase appears three times in Daniel 7 (verses 9, 13, 22), always in judicial contexts. Some scholars see Trinitarian implications in verse 13, where 'one like the Son of man' comes to the Ancient of Days—suggesting two distinct persons within the Godhead. The description resembles Ezekiel's vision of God's throne-chariot (Ezekiel 1) and anticipates Revelation's throne-room scenes (Revelation 4-5). The title emphasizes God's eternal pre-existence in contrast to temporal human kingdoms.

The vision's climax occurs when '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. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed' (Daniel 7:13-14). This 'Son of man' figure—distinguished from the Ancient of Days yet receiving divine honors and eternal kingdom—finds fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who repeatedly identified Himself with Daniel's Son of man, claiming authority to judge (John 5:27) and promising to return 'in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory' (Matthew 24:30).

The vision's interpretation reveals God's sovereign control over history: four successive empires rise and fall (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome), each more terrible than the last, culminating in a final blasphemous kingdom. Yet 'the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom' (Daniel 7:22). The eternal God outlasts all empires, judges all rulers, vindicates all saints, establishes an everlasting kingdom through the Son of man. The title assures believers that however dominant earthly powers appear, however prolonged their tyranny, the Ancient of Days pre-existed them, presides over them, and will ultimately dispose of them—His throne established from eternity, His kingdom without end, His judgments absolutely righteous. When time concludes, the timeless God remains; when kingdoms crumble, His dominion endures; when the books are opened, He who is 'from everlasting to everlasting' sits in perfect justice, rendering to each according to their deeds. The Ancient of Days is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, He who was and is and is to come, the eternal Judge before whom all creation bows.

Key Verses

Daniel 7:9-10

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Daniel 7:13-14

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. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Daniel 7:22

Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

Psalm 90:2

Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.

Revelation 1:8

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 4:2-3

And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.