

Darius 1, king of Persia, is mentioned in the Bible books of Ezra and Haggai. There is also external historical and archaeological evidence of his activities, which supports the Bible record.



“Work on the Temple of God in Jerusalem then ceased, and was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius King of Persia”—Ezra 4:24 NJB. “The second year of Darius’s reign was 520 B. C.”—NLT footnote

Historical and archaeological evidence supports what the Bible says about Darius I, king of Persia.

“They came to do the work in the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month in the second year of Darius the king”—Haggai 1:15 NAB. “This event occurred on September 21, 520 B. C.”—NLT footnote

The Jews who had returned from the Babylonian captivity began rebuilding the temple in 536 BCE. Construction was halted, however, because of opposition from local adversaries of Judah. Sixteen years later, on September 21, 520 BCE, work resumed with the encouragement of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (Ezra 4:24; 5:1-2; Hagai 1:4-15). The Jews were again challenged, this time by Tattenai, governor of the Persian province of Trans-Euphrates (Ezra 5:3-5). He is described as a local governor under the satrap of Babylon and Trans-Euphrates. Tattenai expressed concern about the rebuilding to the Persian king Darius I. However, after locating a copy of a decree made by Cyrus, Darius ordered Tattenai to fully support the reconstruction and even to provide government funding (Ezra 6:1–12). The

temple was completed on March 12, 515 BCE.

Darius I (“the Great”) ruled the Persian Empire from 521 to 486 B.C. He was an accomplished military commander, monumental builder and shrewd administrator who is known both from classical sources and from records contemporary to his rule. The most famous document from Darius’s reign is the Behistun Inscription, emblazoned high on a cliff face in western Iran. This declaration describes Darius’s rise to power in three languages and has provided the key for deciphering the Akkadian language of Mesopotamia. The palace of Darius I has been excavated at the royal center of Persepolis in southern Iran; his tomb, carved into a rock face, is located 3 miles (4.8 km) north of the city.

We can contrast this well documented archaeological evidence of Darius I, king of Persia, with all the people mentioned in the Book of Mormon, none of which have any archaeological evidence supporting their existence.

ONE SOURCE: NIV Archaeological Study Bible