

the dropping water during this time that caused the tips of the mountains to become visible to Noah. But this is not what the Bible actually says, and we are paying special attention to biblical clues here. The Bible says that the tops of the mountains were seen specifically *on one day*, the first day of the tenth month (Gen. 8:5). The mountains around the Ark would have been of varying heights; we cannot expect that the water covering the whole earth suddenly dropped a large amount in one day for these mountaintops to become visible all at once. It should be considered that the Ark may have sat in a thick fog for those two months (a meteorological clue as to the weather conditions), and clearing of the fog made the tops of the mountains become visible on that day. Noah and his family may have gotten quite a surprise that day when they looked out and saw all those mountains towering around them. Also, the relatively accessible location of the Ark described by ancient historians would seem to indicate that the Ark did not land in a high, dangerous, or difficult-to-climb-to place.¹³

As a chemist, I cannot share the optimism that many display for finding a wooden vessel that could be as much as 5,000 years old. Already 2,000 years ago, ancient writers spoke of ‘the remains’,¹⁴ indicating that there was perhaps not a lot of the Ark left then. We would expect that deterioration would have set in over the millennia, aided and abetted by ravages such as pilgrims taking mementos¹⁵ (it would seem that tourists have not changed very much over the years!). We should perhaps think of the Ark landing at a modest height somewhere in those mountains of Ararat; over the thousands of years since, there would have been scavenging and decay, the roof would have caved in, the silts of time would have filled the broken-down hull, and trees would have grown up in the middle of it. In the end, traces of it would be hard to find. This is the realistic picture, as unwelcome as it

must be to those who are certain that they will find the Ark some day.

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2. Habermehl, A., A Review of the Search for Noah's Ark; in: Snelling, A.A. (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference on Creationism*, Creation Science Fellowship, Pittsburgh, PA, and Institute for Creation Research, Dallas, TX, pp. 485–501, 2008; www.harpanddragon.com/ICC6-41.pdf. See Baumgardner's remarks on Mount Ararat as a post-Flood volcano on pp. 490–491.
3. Burdick, C.L., Ararat, the Mother of Mountains, *Creation Research Society Quarterly* 4(1):5–12, 1967.
4. Karakhanian *et al.*, Holocene-Historical Volcanism and Active Faults as Natural Risk Factors for Armenia and Adjacent Countries, *J. Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 113:319–344, 2002. For information on Mt Ararat, see pp. 330–339. Much volcanism has taken place in historic times; the Ark could not possibly be sitting on the surface of the mountain.
5. Yilmaz *et al.*, Geology of the Quaternary Geologic Centers of the East Anatolia, *J. Volcanology and Geothermal Research* 85:173–210, 1998. See p. 193 for the formation of the Ararat volcano from its beginning.
6. Habermehl, ref. 2, p. 487.
7. The site of ancient Babylon is called Al Hillah today, and is located in the Babil governorate of south Iraq.
8. Habermehl, A., Where in the world is the Tower of Babel?, *Answers Research J.* 4:25–53, 2011.
9. Habermehl, ref. 8, p. 29.
10. Habermehl, ref. 8, pp. 26–27.
11. Crouse, B. and Franz, G., Mount Cudi—True mountain of Noah's Ark, *Bible and Spade* 19(4):99–111, 2006.
12. Davidson, F. (Ed.), *The New Bible Commentary*, 2nd ed., Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, 1967.
13. Josephus, *The Works of Josephus*, Whiston translation, new updated edition, Hendrickson, Peabody, MA, p. 526, 1987. Josephus states that the remains of the Ark are shown to anyone who wants to see them.
14. Josephus, ref. 13, p. 526.

15. Berossus, *History of Babylonia*, about 275 BC. Berossus' original manuscript is long lost, but Josephus quotes from it: "... some people carry off pieces of the bitumen, which they take away, and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischiefs" (ref. 13, p. 34).

Russ Humphreys replies:

As I indicated before, I am happy for others to propose different locations for the Ark but will not engage in debating the merits of other sites favoured by others who are passionate about this topic, as there are enough potential ‘preferred locations’ to make such exchanges onerous, and to choose to limit responses to only one or two could (rightly) be seen as preferential.

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Is Darius, the king of Ezra 6:14–15, the same king as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1?

This is a good article. However, Daniel 11:1–4 makes it clear that there would be only four Persian kings. This would be closer to 52 years, not 123 years for the Persian period. And if there is need only for one decree to restore Jerusalem, God gave that decree before Jerusalem was even destroyed through the prophet Jeremiah. The only decree that matters would be God's decree (through Jeremiah).

I am sure you are fixed on ending the Seventy Weeks with Jesus (Yeshua). However, Daniel makes it plain that the Temple would be destroyed at the end of the 70 weeks. He even says sacrifices would be stopped during the last week. The sacrifices did not end at the death of Yeshua (Jesus), but rather they continued all the way to AD 63/64.

Thank you for demonstrating that Darius and Artaxerxes are the same man. That is one bit of information I was lacking.

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David Austin replies:

Thank you for your comments on the article, ‘Darius is Artaxerxes’, especially that you consider that the Darius of Ezra 6:14–15 is the same as the Artaxerxes of Ezra 7:1. However, I cannot agree that the Persian period only lasted about 52 years because of the following facts:

The 70 years captivity of Jeremiah 25:11 commenced with Daniel’s captivity (2 Kings 24:11–16; Daniel 1:1–6) in the 3rd year of the reign of Jehoiakim. In the very next year, the 4th of Jehoiakim and the 1st year of Nebuchadnezzar (not his accession year (Jer. 25:1)), Jeremiah announced the commencement of the 70 years captivity. This fact is agreed on by Bishop Ussher, Floyd Jones, Martin Anstey, Philip Mauro, me, etc. This also means that there were about 19–20 years from Daniel to the destruction of Jerusalem (refer to 2 Kings 25:9 where in Nebuchadnezzar’s 19th year “he burnt the house of the Lord”), and 50–51 more years to the Restoration. Conventional chronology (E.A.W. Budge in the British Museum Guide),¹ gives us the following kings that reigned except Darius the Mede from the destruction of Jerusalem to the end of the 70 years captivity:

Nebuchadnezzar	24 years
Reigned a total of 43 years but 19 were served before the Destruction (2 Kings 25:8).	
Evil-merodach	2 years
Neriglissar	3 years
Labashi-marduk	1 year
Nabonidus	18 years
Darius the Med	1–2 years
Total	49–50 years

There were about another 20 years after the end of the captivity until the 4th year of the Darius (Hystaspis) of Ezra 6:14–15. This is important to note.

Proof of these 20 years is found in checking when the 70 years of fasting (a different 70 years) commenced and ended.

2 Kings 25:8–9 states: “And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar ... he burnt the house of the Lord”.

2 Kings 25:25 states: “But it came to pass in the seventh month [of the same year] that Ishmael ... smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah.”

These are the commencing times for their fasting. Ask also the Jewish scholars.

In the 4th year of Darius, Zechariah (7:5) puts the question, “When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?” *Zechariah is saying that 70 years of fasting had passed to the 4th year of Darius.* So we have about 20 years from the Restoration and 20 years to the 4th year of Darius.

The Scriptures record when the Medo-Persian kingdom began: “In that night was Belshazzar the king of the Chaldeans slain. And Darius the Median took the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old” (Daniel 5:30–31). Cyrus the Great (with Darius the Mede to whom ‘delegated rule’ was given for about 1–2 years) reigned over Babylon for about 8 years. Cambyses ruled about 7 years and 5 months. Smerdis ruled about 7 months. Darius Hystaspis ruled about 36 years. So by his 4th year (Zech. 7:1), 20 years would have passed. Conventional history closely agrees with these times until the end of the reign of Darius Hystaspis.

But here we have a real problem with stating that the Persian period only lasted 52 years. If there were 20 years to the 4th year of Darius, then

there would have been 52 years to the end of his reign. And no time left for the 4th king, Xerxes, who reigned for 12 years at least—some say 21 years because Artaxerxes I took on a viceregency or because Xerxes was murdered. Nor would there be any time left for those other kings who reigned (provincially in districts or as vassals, or in rebellion, etc.) until Alexander the Great, but did not *stand up* as the four kings that followed Cyrus did (Daniel 11:2). E.J. Young² states:

“In the Behistun inscription Darius (i.e. Hystaspis), speaks of the kings who had rebelled against him, and the 9 kings whom he took captive (see Col. IV, par. 2,3). These were men who had ruled over districts which already belonged to Darius.”

I agree there were only four kings after Darius the Mede and Cyrus the Great who *stood up*. Josephus agrees there were six kings altogether. The vision of Daniel 11 was given in the 3rd year of Cyrus (Daniel 10:1), so after Darius the Mede (1) and Cyrus the Great (2) there would have been Cambyses, Pseudo-Smerdis, Darius Hystaspis, and Xerxes (4 more). But these *stood up* until the Persian Empire declined—its warlike glory was annihilated, the people were given to sloth and idleness, and the power of the kingdom was almost destroyed. This discriminating characteristic, opposition to the Jewish nation, and the plans of God Almighty called for divine intervention—refer to Daniel 11:1 (“Also I ... even I, stood to confirm and to strengthen him”). Such intervention has not, as far as I know, been mentioned of other so called kings of conventional history. On Daniel 10:13 Henry Morris³ states:

“This verse provides a remarkable insight into the reality and might of the principalities and powers under the rule of Satan ... Here the help of the archangel, Michael, was necessary to penetrate the demonic hosts of the evil angel

assigned by Satan to oversee the kingdom of Persia.”

Daniel does not “make it plain that the Temple would be destroyed at the end of the 70 weeks”. Daniel 9:24–25 tells us what would happen in the first 69 weeks.

Verse 26 tells us what would happen after that. The Messiah would be cut off (Isaiah 53:8; “he was cut off out of the land ... for the transgression of my people was he stricken”), the Prince would come and destroy the city and the Sanctuary—AD 70, and desolations were determined.

Verse 27 tells us the covenant would be *confirmed* not *made*. The writer does not mean to say in verse 27 that he will *make* a covenant but that he is going to *confirm* a covenant for a ‘week of years’, i.e. the covenant of grace, which covenant has already been made (Genesis 3:15) and which shall, in that 70th week, cause to prevail, and many shall experience its benefits and many shall be saved. There were many conversions at Pentecost. The ordinary idiom to express such a thought of ‘made a covenant’ would be ‘cut a covenant’, #3772, refer Gen. 15:18, *karath*, to cut. The Hebrew word ‘confirm’, #1396, used in Daniel 9:27, means to be strong, prevail, exceed, be great, be mighty, confirm.

Certain eschatological schools of thought theorize that in the last days of the Gentiles—some say after the ‘Rapture’ and in the 7 years of the ‘great tribulation’ period, when God takes up Israel’s cause again—a certain power will arise who will ‘*make*’, not ‘*confirm*’, a covenant with that nation (this school of thought depends upon Daniel 9:27 for its theory) promising protection, etc. The Jews would be allowed to set up the temple worship in Jerusalem and the long-abolished sacrificial system would again be established. All this against the teaching of Hebrews, which was written to professing Hebrew Christians to show the absolute supremacy of Christianity

over Judaism and to declare the end of the ‘OT shadow ministry’. In the midst of that last week the sacrifice (*singular, not plural as you have stated, Brian*) and the oblation would cease; referring to our Lord Jesus Christ’s redemptive work on the Cross and the ‘once offering’ to bear the sins of many, we find that Hebrews 10:26 states: “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins”. After this we are told of the desolation that would come (the armies of Titus encompassing Jerusalem which told the desolation was nigh; Luke 21:20), but nowhere does it state that this desolation came by the time the 70th week was up. It is more than interesting to note that from 457 BC, when the captivity of the 70 years ended (refer to article on Darius is Artaxerxes for this date, taking into account the 4 years error in the calendar) until AD 30 when Christ died on the 14th of Nisan, is very close to 69½ weeks of years = 486.5 years.

Concerning the giving of decrees, I know the Lord works all things after His own will, but he does so either mediately, or immediately. The medium through which the decree was issued was Cyrus the Great (Isaiah 44:26–28), who issued the decree ‘by saying’. When Darius issued a decree to find the ‘lost’ scroll, not build a city (Ezra 6:1), it does not say that God issued it but that Darius was the one responsible.

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Argon diffusion data support RATE’s 6,000-year helium age of the earth

In both a reply to a letter¹ and a later article in this journal,² Dr Russell Humphreys mentions me by name as a critic of the RATE helium project. Since, in his reply to my earlier letter,³ he thanked me for pointing out a serious error of his that was previously missed by the reviewers and editors of the RATE project, I thought that it was appropriate for me to point out the additional mistakes made in his recent article. This article lacked original scientific content. Most of it was devoted to merely rehashing an earlier paper by Harrison, Morgan, and Blackwell.⁴ The only substantive argument was that these authors ‘ignored the volcano’ when considering the thermal history of Fenton Hill, since it conflicted with his own ‘best uniformitarian picture’.¹ Therefore, it is worth considering how good this ‘best uniformitarian model’ really is.

Humphreys constructed his estimate of the thermal history by synthesizing results from three earlier papers.⁵ In his hybrid model, Sasada’s first heating episode (figure 1) was assigned to the emplacement of the magma body⁷ in the Kolstad and McGetchin model,⁸ and the second heating episode was assigned to the recent transient event in the Harrison *et al.* model.⁴ This interpretation required adjustments to both the Kolstad and McGetchin model and the Harrison *et al.* model. Specifically, Humphreys selected a radius of 9–10 km for the magma body,⁹ a depth of burial of 3 km, and a background temperature of 170°C prior to the final transient heating event.¹⁰

This kind of ‘eyeball interpolation’ from figures is problematic at best, since no rigorous mathematical self-consistency is imposed. More importantly, though, his ‘best uniformitarian’ model