

# glyph *notes*

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## Language and the Spoken Word: Key Components for Fulfilling a Prophecy in the Last Days

By Sherrie Kline Smith

*Note: This article has a more “personal” style than my ordinary approach, but I feel led to share in this manner. Most of the illustrations have been used previously, but are repeated here to make the subject being addressed easier to understand.*

Several years ago, I came across some information that I found to be exciting in relation to fulfilling a promise and prophecy found in *The Book of Mormon*. This insight was so uplifting and encouraging that I felt compelled to share my new understanding with readers of *glyph notes*. The result was a series of articles, “*Their Voice Shall Have a Familiar Spirit: Parts 1, 1a, and 2,*” published in the first two issues of 2015.

As I worked on the three articles for publication in 2015, I knew I was focusing on the “trees” (details), instead of the “forest” (broader picture). To help me with this, I prepared a timeline of events to keep things in perspective. I believe, however, that even with the timeline to guide me, I did not accomplish my goal to explain the matter in an understandable manner. Therefore, in this article I am going to try to focus on the “forest”—how God has laid the foundation for the fulfillment of a promise.

### Promise/Prophecy

What is this promise? This promise—which is also one of the purposes in *The Book of Mormon*—is that, in the last days, the book shall be carried forth to descendants of the people in *The Book of Mormon* so that they might come to the knowledge of Christ. Let’s look at what the Lord told Joseph Smith in 1828.

Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for,  
*Cont. on Page 2*



*The Lord  
 promised  
 the prophets  
 in The Book  
 of Mormon  
 that their  
 words would  
 come to their  
 descendants  
 in the last  
 days. God's  
 promises are  
 sure!*

## Language (Cont. from Page 1)

inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people, and to the Nephites, and the Jacobites, and the Josephites, and the Zoramites, *through the testimony of their fathers;*

and this testimony shall come to the knowledge of the Lamanites, and the Lemuelites, and the Ishmaelites, who dwindled in unbelief because of the iniquity of their fathers . . .

and for this very purpose are these plates preserved which contain these records, *that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled,* which he made to his people;

and that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen. (D&C 2:6; [LDS 3:16-20])

The Lord was very specific about the reason for the preservation of the Nephite record—so that the promises of the Lord would be fulfilled. One of those promises is that “through the testimony of their fathers” the knowledge of the Savior will come to those who dwindled in unbelief. *This promise has yet to be fulfilled,* but the Lord has been laying the foundation for the accomplishment of this great commission revealed to Joseph Smith, and to keep his promises made to Nephi (2 Nephi 12:43, 80-87 [LDS 29:2; 30:3-8]), Enos (1:19-28 [LDS 1:13-18]), and others.

Let’s turn now to The Book of Mormon and repeat Nephi’s curious language used in his prophecy concerning this promise.

But behold, I prophesy unto you concerning the last days; concerning the days when the Lord God shall bring these things forth unto the children of men.... [T]he words of the righteous shall be written, and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and *all those who have dwindled in unbelief, shall not be forgotten; For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the*

*dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit...* (2 Nephi 11:80, 83-85 [LDS 26:14-16]).

What does Nephi mean when he says “their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit”? I believe he means the “manner of language” in The Book of Mormon will be familiar to the descendants of people in The Book of Mormon. In the last days, “those who have dwindled in unbelief” will perceive the connection between the book’s words and their own words *because the record uses language in the same way they think and talk.* They will exclaim, “This is our history! These are our fathers!”

Nephi’s prophecy intimates that the language structures and patterns—their “speech,” their “voice”—will survive to the last days. How can this be after more than 2000 years? Language is fluid and constantly changing. We certainly don’t speak Shakespearean English. But I hope you will see how the Lord has preserved certain language structures for more than 2000 years!

### Language and the Spoken Word Key to Fulfilling the Promise

It appears, then, that *language and the spoken word are key components towards fulfilling the promise.* Because language is so important to fulfilling the promise, we should review the nature of the language used in The Book of Mormon. For a long time, we’ve known that the book was written in unusual English syntax, causing critics to claim—and justly so—that the book is full of repetitious language, awkward sentence structure, and strange grammar. When viewed through the lens of Western literary standards, the book appears to be poorly written. In the 1980s, however, many of us began to learn that these unusual language structures were Hebraic literary patterns. We began to realize that the authors of The Book of Mormon had skillfully employed what we call Hebraisms. Now, when viewed through the lens of ancient Middle Eastern literary methods, the book is not only beautifully written, but it has also been beautifully translated by Joseph Smith—*under the influence of the Holy Spirit*—into English, while maintaining its Hebraic language patterns.

Probably many of you are familiar with these language patterns, like parallelism, in different formations—especially couplets, but also triplets, quadruplets, all of which can become quite complicated—repetitious words or ideas, chiasms, word pairs, and the frequent use of “it came to pass.”

Some of these poetic forms are not limited to only Hebrew. For example, English poets use parallelism and couplets. Chinese poetry uses couplets. But in The Book of Mormon, it is the combination of all of these patterns that is important. See Figure 1 for a few examples of some of these language structures.

Besides being a witness that The Book of Mormon is a true ancient Hebraic document, these literary and poetic structures can provide a clue to locating descendants of the people in The Book of Mormon. That is—if the language forms endured through the

ages. Is there evidence that any indigenous people in the Americas wrote and spoke using these same literary structures? Yes! The over 6 million people called the Maya.

### The Maya

The Maya are the only people in the New World that had a writing system at the time of the Conquest\* (Christenson 2012:317). Studies

*Cont. on Page 4*

\* Spanish conquest of much of the Americas in the early 1500s

## Figure 1. Hebraic Language Structures in The Book of Mormon

### Couplets (a type of parallelism)

Pairs of words or phrases having similar content or form or opposites. The Psalms are full of couplets, triplets, and other types of parallelism.

A The **words of the righteous shall be written,**  
 B and the **prayers of the faithful shall be heard.**  
 — 2 Nephi 11:83 [LDS 26:15]

A And behold, **the people** did **rejoice**, and glorify God,  
 B and the whole **face of the land** was filled with **rejoicing.**  
 — Helaman 4:22 [LDS 11:18]; almost 600 years later than the example above from 2 Nephi

### Chiasmus

Inverted parallelism, called “nested couplets” by Josserand and Hopkins. The middle or center has the most important information, but not all chiasms have a center point, like the first example below. Josserand and Hopkins refer to the middle as the “peak event.” Chiasms can be short or long and complicated, including entire books in the Bible, such as Ruth and Jonah.

A And the **Nephites and the Jews**  
 B **shall have the words of**  
 C the **lost tribes of Israel;**  
 C' and the **lost tribes of Israel**  
 B' **shall have the words of**  
 A' the **Nephites and the Jews**  
 — 2 Nephi 12:71-72 [LDS 29:13]

A For behold, at the **going down of the sun,**  
 B **there was no darkness;**  
 C and the people began to be astonished,  
 B' because **there was no darkness,**  
 A' **when the night came.**  
 — 3 Nephi 1:17 [LDS 1:15];  
 600 years after the example to the left

### Repetitious Language

Nevertheless, God sendeth more witnesses; and he **proveth** all his words. (verse 6)  
 Behold, **my soul delighteth in proving unto my people** the truth of the **coming of Christ**.... (verse 7)  
**[M]y soul delighteth** in the covenants of the Lord.... (verse 10)  
 Yea, **my soul delighteth** in his grace.... (verse 11)  
 And **in proving unto my people** that save **Christ should come**, all men must perish. (verse 12)  
 — Selected portion from 2 Nephi 8:2-14 [LDS 11:2-7]

See also Alma 3 [LDS 5]. Look for the repetitious use of these words:

Behold

I say unto you/I ask of you/I can tell you

I know/I do know

will you persist

Language (Cont. from Page 3)

of the approximately 28 languages of the Maya have demonstrated the presence of these same structures referenced in the previous paragraphs. Documentation from more than 2000 years of the Maya way of writing and speaking is available for comparison. In the prior series of articles, I divided these 2000 years into three different timeframes. The first was ancient Maya writing (hieroglyphics); followed by documents written in the sixteenth century by the Maya using the Latin alphabet (usually called colonial documents); and the present, how they speak today.

**Ancient Maya Writing**

Most ancient Maya writing is found in their hieroglyphic inscriptions engraved in stone panels on walls and columns called stelae; on portable objects


like pottery, bones, jade, and shells; as well as painted on cave walls or walls of buildings; plus screen-folded books, of which only four are known to have survived. The majority of the ancient inscriptions found to date were engraved from around A.D. 300-800. That's the majority. New discoveries of examples of earlier writing, however, have pushed back the date for Maya writing to 300-250 B.C.


With the publication in 1841 of the Stephens and Catherwood book—*Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*—awareness of the ancient Maya writing system became widely known. Decipherment of the writing system, however, lagged for over a hundred years; until the 1970s and '80s when it began to advance rapidly. Michael Coe's book, *Breaking the Maya Code*, and the DVD produced by Night Fire Films based on Coe's book tell the fascinating account of how decipherment progressed.


At the same time decipherment was taking off, a few scholars—among them, J. Kathryn Josserand and her husband Nicholas A. Hopkins—began analyzing the hieroglyphic texts beyond their simple meaning or grammar of each glyph, but as literature. In their analyses of these inscriptions, they began to see certain patterns (see Figure 2). These patterns or language structures identified by them are the same as the Hebraic literary structures found in The Book of Mormon. For more examples in the hieroglyphs, see Figure 3.


**Figure 2. Quirigua Monument 3/Stela C East Side Inscription - Creation Text**


*Parallelism (triplet C's), Chiasmus, Four "It came to pass" (ictp) Glyphs, and Repetitious Language*


**A1**  date, creation verb


**B1**  3 stones were set

**C1**  placed, set stone gods ictp/place throne

**C2**  placed, set stone god ictp/place throne

**C3**  and it came to pass stone placed, set god throne ictp/place

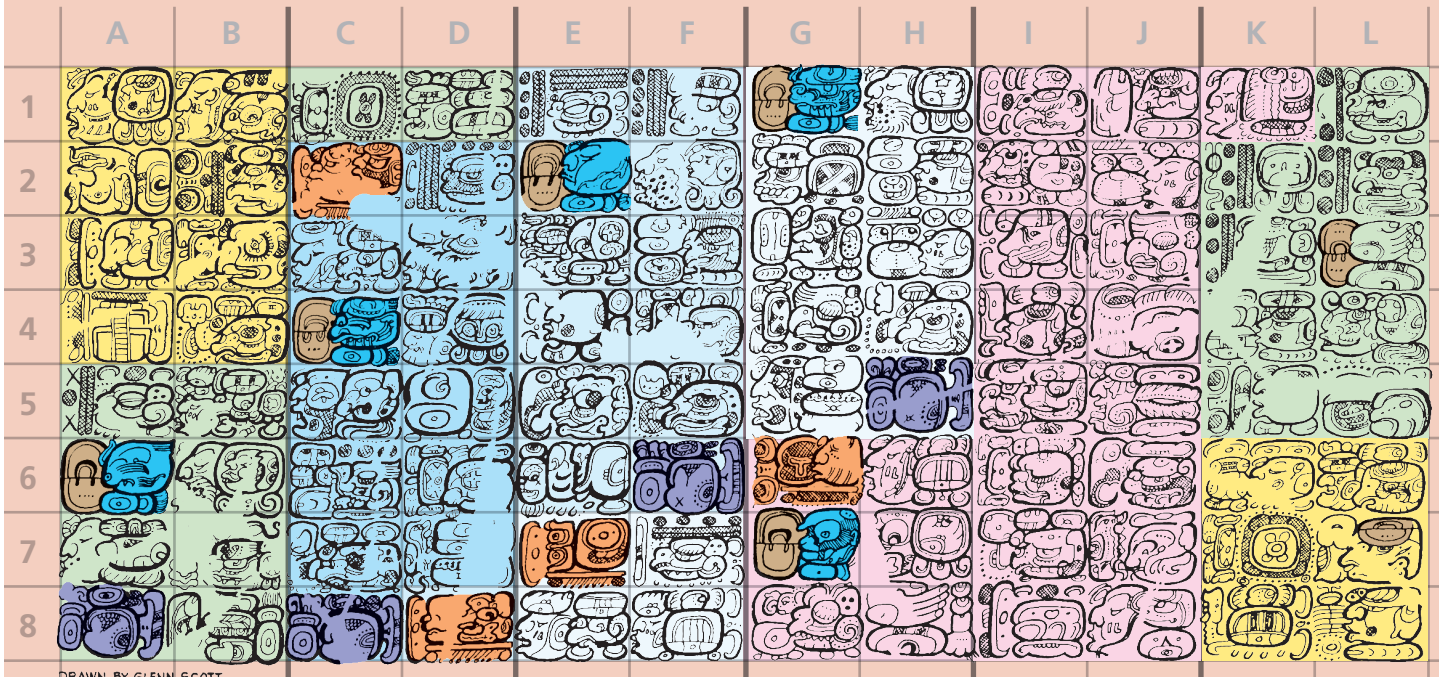
**B2**  at the first 3-stone place (heaven)

**A2**  date, verb and god doing the creating

■ **Tan:** "and"  
■ **Dark Blue:** "it came to pass"

### Figure 3. Maya Inscriptions

The Tablet of 96 Glyphs incorporates five Hebraic language structures: parallelism (couplets, triplet); chiasmus; repetitious language; word pairs; and frequent use of “and it came to pass.” The Tablet, an absolute masterpiece in its composition and in its execution, demonstrates the writing skill and knowledge of the ancient Maya. It was created in A.D. 783, more than 400 years after the narrative in The Book of Mormon, yet the scribes were still using a Hebraic style of writing—the same as used in The Book of Mormon. See original article in the Jan/Feb/Mar 2015 issue for more information and illustrations.



DRAWN BY GLENN SCOTT

- ~ Each letter and number (i.e., A1, B1, etc.) designates a glyph block.
- ~ Each block usually is composed of two or more glyphs.
- ~ The tablet is read left to right, two columns at a time (i.e., A1, B1, A2, B2, and so forth).
- **Yellow and ■ Green:** an envelope chiasm
- **Tan:** “and”
- **Dark Blue:** “it came to pass”
- **Orange:** word pairs
- ■ ■ **Light Blue, three shades:** triple identical parallel couplets. Each couplet begins with a different word pair that is followed by dates and the phrase “and it came to pass.” Each one ends with the glyphs for the ■ **White House**. These three identical parallel couplets record the accession dates of three Palenque kings.
- **Pink:** reason for creation of the tablet

### Maya Colonial Documents

Now, we jump to over a thousand years later, to Maya Colonial documents. These were written by native Maya speakers using the Latin alphabet. Some examples used in Part 1 were from the Popol Vuh, *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, and a religious dance drama that was in existence before the Conquest. The Popol Vuh, written in 1558 by a K’iche’ Maya, and the Annals, a manuscript written in Cakchiquel between 1571 and 1604, both have historical and mythological components. The Popol Vuh includes their account of creation and is often referred to as the “Mayan Bible.” Again, we discovered that, although a thousand years later, these Maya

documents still employed Hebraic language patterns (see Figure 4).

### Present-Day Maya

Having examined the writing style in the Maya’s ancient inscriptions and native colonial documents, we move forward 500 years to the language used by present-day Maya. This was covered in Part 2 of my Spirit series. The information I gleaned from works by Nicholas Hopkins and Gary Gossen provided the stimulus for the prior articles. The real eye-opener, for me, were two presentations given by Hopkins. I didn’t hear them, but he graciously sent me copies.

*Cont. on Page 6*

## Figure 4. Maya Sixteenth-Century Colonial Documents

### Couplets

They talked together then.  
They thought and they pondered.

They came to a decision,  
They reached an accord, bringing together their  
words and their thoughts.

— Popol Vuh (Christenson 2003(1):70)

when man was made in misery,  
and when man was formed;

he was fed with wood,  
he was fed with leaves;

.....  
he could not speak,  
he could not walk;

he had no blood,  
he had no flesh;

so say our fathers,  
our ancestors, oh you my sons.

— *Annals of the Cakchiquels* (Brinton 1885:69)

### Chiasmus

A Oh, **our first mother,**

B Oh, **our first father;**

C **They are the workmanship of the sun;**

C' **They are the workmanship of brightness;**

B' They are **our fathers;**

A' They are **our mothers.**

— Baile Patza, a K'iche' dance-drama,  
"the only ancient religious drama  
to have survived in the Guatemalan  
highlands..." (Christenson 2012:331).

A Then **they were multiplied,**

B **There at the place of dawn.**

C Truly the **names of the people** came to be:

D **Sovereign,**

E **Ballplayer,**

E' **Masker,**

D' **Sun Lord.**

C' [These were] the **names of the people** by  
Which they were now called.

B' **There at the place of dawn**

A' **They were multiplied.**

— Popol Vuh (Christenson: 2012:323)

## Language (Cont. from Page 5)

What I learned was exciting! Everything I had studied over the years about Maya ancient writing and colonial documents fell into place! I began to see how God had been working to fulfill Nephi's prophecy.

Both Hopkins and Gossen have been studying Mayan languages since the 1960s. Gossen identified that the Tzotzil Maya oral tradition has a range of levels of speech that differ in their formality, from common conversation, which is the least formal, to prayer, the most formal speech (Hopkins 2013:3; Gossen 1974:46-55). "The couplet [a type of parallelism] is the hallmark of formal speech in Mayan languages..." (Hopkins and Josserand 2012:28-9). Maya prayers typically consist of nothing but couplets.

The structure of Maya formal speech, however, is not limited to simple couplets or parallelisms but can be quite complex. In sacred speech or prayer, "the speaker constructs the dialogue carefully, with attention to the traditional patterns that define Maya poetics." All these traditional patterns "render formal speech difficult to understand for someone

not versed in the (oral) tradition" (Hopkins 2013:[3]). These *traditional patterns* referenced by Hopkins *are some of the same patterns as those used in both ancient Hebrew and The Book of Mormon*, including couplets, chiasms, word pairs, and repetitious language.

To illustrate a traditional Maya prayer, I selected one that present-day Maya Day Keepers (holy men) offer before reading the Popol Vuh. The prayer is a perfect example of complex parallelisms and repetitious language. I formatted Dennis Tedlock's translation to make the parallelisms more apparent. The prayer, which is lengthy, also employs chiasms and has additional word pairs. **See Figure 5.**

In relation to Maya prayers, Hopkins wrote, "There is not so much contrast between traditional [Maya] prayer and Christian prayer. The Psalms, for instance, show many of the same rhetorical structures (like chiasmus), and *liturgies in the two traditions are not dissimilar*" (2013:[12]; emphasis added). When comparing the Psalms to Maya prayers, Hopkins and Josserand also have commented, "*It is apparent that the language from which this text [Psalm 29] is translated had a couplet*

*rhyming tradition like that of the Maya*" (Josserand and Hopkins 2011:18; emphasis added).

While reading Hopkins' material, I began to wonder if The Book of Mormon also had these types of formal speech, like complex prayers. My search immediately bore fruit! Nephi's prayer exhibits many of the characteristics found in Maya sacred speech. There are parallelisms, couplets, and repetition of words and phrases (Figure 5).

Maya prayers are their most formal speech, but the level just below is the formal language used in religious rituals and courts. See Figure 6a for example of a Maya's explanation of a religious ritual that takes place in Tila, Chiapas, Mexico. Again, I reformatted this English translation by Josserand to make the literary structures—an envelope chiasm

enclosing two couplets and triplet—easier to see.

When I read Hopkins' reference about religious rituals and courts using formal speech patterns, I immediately thought of kingly courts. Knowing that The Book of Mormon has several instances of recorded conversation between kings and others, I searched to see if these also employ poetic patterns. Bingo! The first conversation I analyzed was a perfect chiasm! (Figure 6b) I love the second example, also shown in Figure 6b. This conversation takes place in the court of King Limhi when Ammon was captured outside the city gates. The King makes comments and Ammon responds with language that creates a perfect chiasm. What is astounding is that the modern-day Maya do this, even in common conversation!

*Cont. on Page 8*

## Figure 5. Formal/Sacred Speech: Prayers

### *Present-Day Maya*

- A **Make my guilt vanish,**  
 B **Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth;** do me a favor,  
 C **give me strength . . .**  
 D and may **this reading** of the Popol Vuh come out clear as dawn,  
 E and may the sifting of ancient times be complete  
**in my heart, in my head;**
- A and **make my guilt vanish . . .** you who speak with the  
 B **Heart of Sky and Earth,**  
 C may all of you together **give strength**  
 D to **the reading** I have undertaken.

— Translation by Tedlock 1996:18-19

— Arrangement by Sherrie Kline Smith

### *The Book of Mormon*

- A O Lord, I have **trusted in thee,**  
 B and I will **trust in thee** for ever.  
 C I will not **put my trust** in the **arm of flesh;**
- A for I know that **cursed is he**  
 B that **putteth his trust** in the **arm of flesh.**
- A Yea, **cursed is he**  
 B that **putteth his trust** in man, or maketh **flesh his arm.**
- A Yea, I know that **God will give** liberally to him that asketh.  
 B Yea, my **God will give** me, if I ask not amiss:
- A therefore **I will lift up my voice unto thee;** yea, I will cry unto thee,  
 B **my God, the rock** of my righteousness.
- A Behold, **my voice shall for ever ascend up unto thee,**  
 B **my rock** and mine everlasting **God.** Amen.

## Figures 6a-b. Formal Speech: Ritual and Court Language

### 6a. Present-Day Maya

This excerpt is from a narration by Bernardo Pérez Martínez, of Tila, Chiapas, June 5, 1995, explaining the festival of Santa Cruz: The Feast of the Holy Cross. The chiasm encloses two couplets and a triplet.

This story that I'm going to tell today is about

how we **celebrate the day of the Holy Cross**  
here in our land of Tila.

A We do it just as in the **olden days**, according to  
**the customs of our fathers and mothers, our grandfathers and grandmothers.**

B **They celebrated the festival of the cross,**

C because **the cross, our ancestors** say,

D **is where our Holy Father came down long ago.**

a That's why it was the **custom for our parents**

b to **celebrate the festival of the cross.**

a **Our ancestors**

b **celebrated the day of the cross** on the third day in May.

a They gathered together in our land.

b not just here below (in the town);

c there (at the mountain cave shrine),

D' **where our Holy Father showed himself long ago.**

C' We call that **the high cross**. All **our people** come together;

B' **they celebrate the festival** right there.

A' That was **the custom of our grandfathers and grandmothers long ago.**

— Translation by Jossierand and Hopkins 1996:59

— Arrangement by Sherrie Kline Smith

### 6b. The Book of Mormon

Gideon approaches King Limhi to suggest a way for their people to escape the tyranny of the Lamanites. He begins with a chiasm.

A And now O king, if thou hast not found me to be an unprofitable **servant**,

B or if **thou hast hitherto listened to my words** in any degree,

C and they have been of service to thee,

B' even so I desire that **thou wouldst listen to my words** at this time,

A' and I will be thy **servant**, and deliver this people out of bondage.

— Mosiah 10:6 [LDS 22:4]

King Limhi requests Ammon to explain who he is.

A **Behold I am Limhi, the son of Noah . . .**

B for this cause **have I suffered that ye should be preserved . . .**

C or else I should have caused that my guards

**should have put you to death. Ye are permitted to speak.**

Ammon responds by repeating King Limhi's words and concepts in reverse order, thus creating a chiasm.

C' O king, I am very thankful before God this day, that

**I am yet alive, and am permitted to speak . . .**

B' for I am assured that if ye had known me,

**ye would not have suffered that I should have worn these bands.**

A' **For I am Ammon, and am a descendant of Zarahemla....**

— Mosiah 5:12-17 [LDS 7:9-13]



## Language (Cont. from Page 7)

## Preservation of the Language

I hope this review of the three time periods of Maya writing and speaking has helped you to see how these language structures have been preserved for over 2000 years. Hopkins, a linguist for over 50 years, finds this preservation amazing:

*It is nothing short of amazing the degree to which this poetic tradition has survived over the ages, preserved in the folk tradition even as the Maya went through first internal transformations and then conquest and domination by a foreign culture. While the content of formal speech and prayer may have changed, the poetic structure of the discourse has survived intact* (2013:[5]; emphasis added).

Yes! It is *amazing!* We in the Restoration, however, should not be amazed. We know why these poetic structures, manifested in Maya speech, have survived intact for over 2000 years—so that “those who have dwindled in unbelief” will come to the knowledge of Jesus Christ through “the testimony of their fathers.” We know God’s promises are sure.

As the years have come and gone, I believe we have become complacent—and that includes me—about the Hebraic nature of The Book of Mormon. But as we have moved through the material in this article (and the prior three), I hope we have recognized just how important the Hebraic nature is for fulfilling Nephi’s prophecy and God’s promises! In addition, *the quality of the translation is key* for restoring those who have dwindled in unbelief to the knowledge of their fathers and their testimony of Jesus Christ.

The Lord promised the prophets in The Book of Mormon that their words would come to their descendants in the last days. Who will help the present-day Maya hear their ancestors’ speech out of the dust, which “shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit”? We need those willing to work on translating The Book of Mormon into Mayan languages. Those who will be cognizant of the importance in making sure *its poetic structures remain*. And we hope that those who have opportunity to read or hear these words of their ancestors will respond to that “familiar spirit.” The time is now! The Lord has laid the foundation. And now—who will accomplish this great task?

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## The Book of Mormon: A Second Witness for Christ's Resurrection\*

By Sherrie Kline Smith

When a witness is called to testify in a court, he/she swears to tell the truth. This often leads to proof of someone's guilt or innocence. So, how does one *prove* the resurrection of Christ? We need witnesses. Of course, those most widely known are the accounts of the apostles in the New Testament. The very nature of the name—New Testament—refers to the testimonies of those who saw Jesus crucified, laid in a tomb, and later, risen from the dead.

Are there other eyewitness accounts besides those in the New Testament? Mormon, editor/compiler of The Book of Mormon, records Nephi's first-hand account about Christ's visit to the "lost sheep" who had been led to the Land of Promise (3 Nephi 4-13:24 [LDS 8-28:12]). This visit was *after* his resurrection from the dead. Many other authors in The Book of Mormon preach, testify, and witness of Christ—his suffering, death, and resurrection.

The Book of Mormon has several purposes. Foremost among those purposes is to convince "the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ" (Title Page of The Book of Mormon). Enoch testifies (as revealed to Joseph Smith in June 1830) that the Lord told him, "truth will I send forth out of the earth to bear testimony of my Only Begotten; his resurrection from the dead..." (D&C 36:12:e-f). This "truth" sent forth "out of the earth" is The Book of Mormon.

But where did these events of Jesus' visit to the Land of Promise take place? Archaeology, epigraphy, and legends from the New World abound in what could be interpreted as "proofs" of Jesus and his resurrection.

The Maya ruins of Quirigua in Guatemala have many stone columns engraved with inscriptions called stelae. One of these stelae, officially called Stela C, is referred to by epigraphers as the Creation Stela because



Merle Greene Robertson

An ornate, jeweled cross is the central motif on the lid of King Pakal's sarcophagus.

the hieroglyphic inscription relates, in beautiful chiasmic style (a hallmark of Hebraic linguistics), that heaven, earth, and sea were created by the "Raised-Up Sky Lord." Epigraphers and linguists believe this means the one who raised the sky. On the other hand, this could be a risen Lord who did the creating, because this "Raised-Up Sky Lord" is believed to be the same as the Maya God G1 who is a reborn or resurrected god. The drawing on **page 4, in this issue**, illustrates the chiasm of the Creation Stela inscription.

At the site in Palenque, Mexico, the iconography and beliefs recorded in the inscriptions could be



Don Beebe

The east side of Stela C, at the site of Quirigua, Guatemala, relates the first events of creation in a Hebraic poetic pattern called chiasmus.

evidences of the resurrection. Three different inscriptions at the site have the cross as their central motif. Two of these crosses are on large engraved panels in the Temple of the Cross and the Temple of the Foliated Cross, not far from the pyramid called Temple of the Inscriptions, which in reality is not a temple but a pyramid tomb for one of the city's kings, King Pakal. The cross motif is on the lid of King Pakal's sarcophagus. David Stuart, expert epigrapher, writes, "The sarcophagus of Pakal is possibly the most famous of all Maya monuments, presenting in text and image a compelling story of Pakal's royal ancestry and of *his own divine resurrection after death*" (Stuart and Stuart 2008:173; emphasis added). The sarcophagus is a masterpiece of engraving and linguistics. The lid shows the king emerging from the underworld in the act of being resurrected. Behind the king's image is a "sacred jeweled cross." A celestial or sky-band "frames the entire scene and indicates what takes place in the heavens" (Stuart and Stuart 2008:173). A lot more could be said of this pyramid/tomb that Stuart calls "The House of Resurrection."

Why do the Maya have a belief in resurrection from the dead? Something or someone must have caused them to come to this understanding.

Throughout the Americas, among the ancient peoples, is a belief of a

"bearded white god." In the area of Mesoamerica (parts of Mexico, Guatemala, Belize, and parts of Honduras and El Salvador), this god is called in different languages Quetzalcoatl, Kukulcan, or Q'ukumatz. In *He Walked the Americas*, L. Taylor Hansen compiled a collection of legends about "The Healer" from indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. Of particular significance is that numerous of these different indigenous people have an ancient legend about a "Pale God" who visited them, performed miracles, and taught many of the same things Jesus did, as recorded in the Bible and The Book of Mormon.

Do these few examples prove the resurrection of Christ? Probably not, but these and much more not included here give pause, forcing one to consider— who else or where else did these beliefs come from?




Aaron Presler

Bearded White God from panel in a building at the ball court in Chichen Itza.

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2008 *Palenque: Eternal City of the Maya*, Thames & Hudson

\*Author's note: *For Easter this year, the women's department at our branch compiled a booklet with "evidences" of the resurrection of Jesus. I was asked to write something about the people in the Americas. This article is a slightly revised version of the one included in the booklet.* 



## glyph quotes

By Eric English

*And because of this, their great wickedness and their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; Therefore, they did not prosper... —Helaman 2:46 [LDS 4:37]*

One of the common and almost universal experiences that we all have had in our modern society is to go through the dreaded job interview. The interview can range from something rather simple or complicated. For a volunteer position of responsibility at church, you might be asked only a couple of casual questions by the pastor. Seeking a job with the government in a high security environment, however, could entail multiple rounds of interviews, aptitude tests, and an exhaustive background check to select just the right candidate. In fact, for most of us, the experience of being interviewed starts in childhood. As we prepare to enter kindergarten,

we're tested and asked simple questions to determine if we're ready to begin school or not. From there, throughout our youth, the process leads into multiple interview opportunities for sports teams, fine arts programs, student council, college entrance, and potentially many job interviews all through our adult life. A common denominator in all of these interview experiences is the temptation to boast about ourselves; to go above and beyond explaining our qualifications or experience, and begin to brag, puffing ourselves up—perhaps stretching the truth just a bit—and let pride set in.

*Cont. on Page 12*

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## Language (Cont. from Page 11)

This concept of boasting is seen throughout The Book of Mormon. In the majority of instances, the author shares a warning against allowing ourselves to indulge the temptation of boasting about ourselves. Bragging about our own strength, our own accomplishments (works), and our own abilities can be a clear signal that selfishness is settling into our hearts and demonstrates externally who we have placed on the throne of our lives. Boasting can be one of the fruits of pride, and it is insidious and sneaky and can catch us unaware.

The Nephites clearly struggled with this issue throughout their history. They provide a valuable lesson to us of this dangerous temptation that we must *all* wrestle against throughout our lives *with the prosperity cycle*. We are tempted to take those blessings for granted and can begin to think that we

are responsible for our prosperity. This is the point in the cycle where boasting can enter in. It precedes the rejection and judgment that will inevitably follow from the Lord. When we repent and come unto him, then he is quick to forgive and bless us.

If we really consider the words of Helaman in the quote above, the results of boasting are truly frightening. When the Nephites were caught up in boast-

ing about themselves and their own strength, God left them on their own, to depend solely on themselves. In this world of sin, sadness, despair, unfairness, trial, and tribulation, I suspect that none of us would welcome a situation where we were left completely alone. Instead, let us boast in the glory, majesty, love, and goodness of our God. Let us keep him on the throne of our lives, reject the temptation toward boasting and pride, and learn to depend on his strength more and more from day to day. 



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