

## glyph

notes

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## CREATION

By Sherrie Kline Smith and Lyle Smith

**Maya Conquest Documents  
 Maya Stone Inscriptions  
 The Holy Scriptures, Inspired Version  
 The Book of Mormon**

*The thesis of the Maya creation story is:*

Maya scholars have translated the Maya creation story. It is found written in books like the *Popol Vuh* around AD 1550 and in the last few years translated from the hieroglyphs carved on stone stelae and tablets around AD 700.

This creation account of the Maya parallels the essentials, the main points of the Christian creation account as told in the Scriptures, especially in the Inspired Version and The Book of Mormon.

**First**, we'll show you brief information about the conquest documents.

**Second**, in detail, we will show you the reading of the stone inscription of the Maya creation story as found on Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala. These glyphs are **color coded** so that you can understand which glyphs we are referring to.

**Third**, we will show you a brief example of the chiasmic structure of this stela.

*Heiroglyphs carved on East Side of Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala. Stela C stands about 20 feet tall. The bottom two thirds is of particular interest to us.*

*Cont. on Page 2*



Don Beebe

*The Quirigua*

*rendition*

*of creation*

*exemplifies*

*other Scriptures*

*and bears*

*witness that*

*the Maya had*

*these creation*

*Scriptures.*



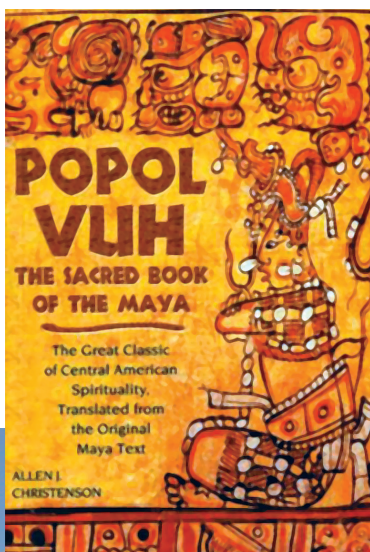
Creation (Cont. from Page 1)

### Maya creation in conquest documents

The Maya creation story is found not only in legends among the present-day Maya but also in sixteenth-century texts written at the time of the Conquest, such as the *Popol Vuh* and the books of Chilam Balam and the Annals of the Cakchiquels. Maya priests or scribes wrote these creation accounts in their own languages using the alphabet taught them by the Spaniards.

Right: The *Popol Vuh* translated into English by Allen J. Christenson

Below: The church at Chichicastenango, Guatemala where the *Popol Vuh* manuscript was rediscovered.



In AD 1558 the *Popol Vuh* was written by anonymous members of the Quiche-Maya nobility at the command of their European conquerors.

It was lost and not rediscovered until AD 1701 by a Spanish priest in a church in Chichicastenango, Guatemala. He copied the Maya K'iche from the original manuscript (now lost) and wrote a Spanish translation next to it on the same page.

It is considered the Maya bible. Numerous

translations into different languages have been made.



Left: The *Popol Vuh* was copied in 1701. Left side – K'iche (Quiché) language in alphabet (Latin letters) Right side – Spanish Translation by Francisco Ximénez



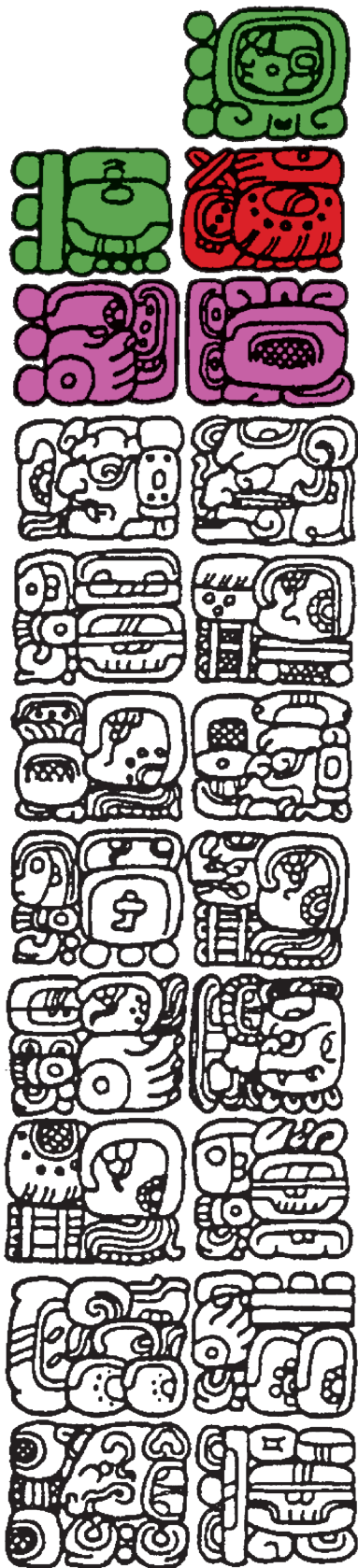
Lyle Smith



Drawing of partial view of East Side, Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala

## Maya creation in stone inscriptions

The Maya creation story is found in carved inscriptions on the East Side of Stela C at Quirigua, Guatemala.



### Maya Mythical DATE OF CREATION/Beginning

This Maya date correlates in our calendar to 3114 BC.

### By the POWER OF THE SPOKEN WORD the image was manifest or appeared

#### Maya Inscriptions

This understanding from the inscriptions is what caused prominent Maya scholars to realize that the ancient Maya thought of creation in the same way as those from the Conquest period. The *Popol Vuh*, an account of creation by the Quiché Maya written in the sixteenth century, explains creation happened by speaking the word. “Then the earth was created by them. **Merely their word brought about the creation of it.** In order to create the earth, they said, ‘Earth,’ and immediately it was created ...” (Christenson 2003:71).

#### Holy Scriptures

“And **this I did by the word of my power; and it was done as I spake**” (Genesis 1:8 IV).

“And it was so, **even as I spake**” (Genesis 1:8, 9, 10, 15 IV).

“And **God said**”(Genesis 1:8 King James Version).

#### Book of Mormon

**By the power of his word** man came upon the face of the earth which earth was created **By the power of his word** (Jacob 3:12-13 [5:51-52]).

### Three stones are placed for the three thrones in THREE DOMAINS.

#### Maya Inscriptions

“Each of the stones that was set is associated with one of the three domains of the universe: **sky** (chan); **earth** (kab); and **water** (nab ha)” (Harris and Stearns 1997:157).

#### Holy Scriptures

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . . that is **in the heaven above**, or that is **in the earth beneath**, or that is **in the water under the earth**” (Exodus 20:4 IV).

#### Book of Mormon

The Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi repeats the Ten Commandments which includes the same phrase as found in Exodus: “For in six days the Lord made **heaven** and **earth**, and **the sea** and all that in them is ...” (Mosiah 7:118 [13:19]).

“Thy throne is **high in the heavens** ...” (1 Nephi 1:13 [1:14]).

*Cont. on Page 4*

Emphasis added to scriptures/quotes above.

Drawing of partial view of East Side, Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala



Creation (Cont. from Page 3)

**First Stone/Throne: Gods Placed the Jaguar Throne in HEAVEN**

**Second Stone/Throne: God placed the Serpent Throne on EARTH**

**Third Stone/Throne: God placed the WATER Throne at Laying Down Sky**

**Maya Inscriptions**

The three stones are laid (set) for the three thrones which are created at the “first three-stone place” (heaven). On the Quirigua Stela C “each of the stones that was set is associated with one of the three domains of the universe: **sky** (chan); **earth** (kab); and **water** (nab ha)” (Harris and Stearns 1997:157). And according to the Maya writer of the *Popol Vuh*, “The sky was set apart. The earth also was set apart within the waters” (Christenson 2003:73).

**Holy Scriptures**

In the Quirigua text thrones are being created in these three domains. What do the Scriptures say about thrones?

“Thus saith the Lord, **the heaven is my throne ...**” (Isaiah 66:1 IV). See also Colossians 1:16 and Matthew 5:38, which is also found in 3 Nephi 5:82 [12:36]. A scripture search for “throne” proves enlightening in the context of this Maya creation text on Stela C.

“And again, I, God, said, Let there be a firmament in **the midst of the waters**; and it was so, even as I spake. And I said, Let it divide the waters from the waters; and it was done” (Genesis 1:9 IV).

**Book of Mormon**

Lehi exclaims, “Thy throne is **high in the heavens ...**” (1 Nephi 1:13 [1:14]).

“He ruleth **high in the heavens**, for it is his throne ...” (1 Nephi 5:130 [17:39]).

And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is **high in the heavens**,... (Moroni 9:28 [9:26])

Jacob and Alma also talk about the throne of God.

**IT CAME TO PASS**

There are four of these glyphs interspersed throughout this narrative. It reminds us of the frequent use of this phrase in The Book of Mormon.

Emphasis added to scriptures/quotes above.

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Glenn Scott



Drawing of partial view of East Side, Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala



**Three stones are placed for the three thrones in THREE DOMAINS.**

**Maya Inscriptions**

In reference to the “planting” or placing of three stones related in the “creation” inscription on Stela C at Quirigua, Brian Stross remarked that “each stone stood symbolically for one of the three cosmic realms: **sky, earth, sea**” (Stross 1994:164).

**Holy Scriptures**

“Thus saith the Lord, **the heaven is my throne ...**” (Isaiah 66:1 IV).

**Book of Mormon**

“He ruleth **high in the heavens, for it is his throne ...**” (1 Nephi 5:130 [17:39]).

**Maya Mythical DATE OF CREATION/Beginning**

This Maya date is repeated in the lower portion of the stela.

**He Who Spoke Caused It to be Done, THE RAISED-UP SKY LORD**

**Maya Inscriptions**

The last correlation is who does the creating. On Quirigua Stela C the “Raised-up Sky Lord” coordinates or causes creation to take place. In current anthropological literature, the Raised-up Sky Lord has other names like Hun-Yal-Ne, Maize God, First Father, and what is referred to as God GI who may be the same as Quetzalcoatl (Smith 2006). This god is known as a **reborn or resurrected god**.

**Holy Scriptures**

This sounds remarkably like Jesus Christ. Do we not call Jesus Christ, the resurrected Lord, the “Risen Savior,” or as the Mayas call him, the Raised-up Sky Lord?

The Quirigua rendition of creation exemplifies other Scriptures and bears witness that the Maya had these Scriptures. “**The heavens he made; the earth is his footstool, and the foundation thereof is his; behold he laid it ...**” (Genesis 6:46 IV). Nephi echoes Psalm 102:25 in his writings. “**Mine hand hath also laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens**” (1 Nephi 6:20 [20:13] and Isaiah 48:13, emphasis added). “**That I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth**” (Isaiah 51:16 IV and 2 Nephi 5:99 [8:16]).

Who created the world is important. God and Christ want us to know that they are responsible for creation. Descendants of the Nephites/Lamanites/Mulekites knew, even years after the close of the account related in The Book of Mormon, that Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord or Raised-up Sky Lord was the God of creation.

Emphasis added to scriptures/quotes above.

*Cont. on Page 6*



Drawing of partial view of East Side, Stela C, Quirigua, Guatemala

Creation (Cont. from Page 5)

**Maya Creation Story Inscribed in Stone**



Maya Mythical Date of Creation 3114 B.C.

By the Power of the Spoken Word

Three Stones/Thrones Placed

These Gods Placed

It Came to Pass/Happened

Jaguar Stone/Throne Placed in Heaven

This God Placed

It Came to Pass/Happened

Serpent Stone/Throne Placed on Earth

It Came to Pass/Happened

This God Placed

Water Stone/Throne Placed at Laying Down Sky

It Came to Pass/Happened

Three Stones/Thrones Placed

Maya Mythical Date of Creation 3114 B.C.

By the Raisedup Sky Lord

**Book of Mormon**

Jesus Christ appeared to the people of The Book of Mormon after he had been raised up from the dead. “It had been prophesied among them that **Christ should shew himself unto them** after his ascension into heaven” (3 Nephi 5:13 [11:12]). It’s only natural that Maya (Nephite/Lamanite/Mulekite) accounts would refer to the Christ as the Raised-up Sky (Risen) Lord. King Benjamin tells his people that the angel told him concerning the coming of Christ. “He shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the **Creator of all things, from the beginning ...**” (Mosiah 1:102 [3:8]).

King Benjamin in the same proclamation urges his people to “Believe in God ... **he created all things** both in heaven and in earth” (Mosiah 2:13 [4:9]). Some years later, Christ fulfills that angel message to King Benjamin when he appears to the Nephites. He informs them, “Behold I am Jesus Christ, the son of God. **I created the heavens and the earth**, and all things that in them are (3 Nephi 4:44 [9:15]).

**Maya Creation Story in Chiasm**

Not only is the inscription found on Stela C an important Maya account of creation, but it is an excellent example of chiasmus.

Chiasmus simply stated is writing a phrase and then repeating it in reverse order. Many times described as a mirror image, chiasmus can consist of only two lines or be complicated, involving whole chapters.


**Maya Inscriptions**


In April 1995, Kathryn Josserand and her husband Nicholas Hopkins taught a workshop at the University of Pennsylvania called “Poetry of the Inscriptions.” They illustrated how many of the Maya inscriptions use a couplet and/or chiasmic structure. In fact, Josserand claimed almost all the inscriptions use this format. One of the main examples used in the class was Stela C from Quirigua as illustrated in Figure 1 on page 7 (Smith 1995 & 1998).


Emphasis added to scriptures/quotes above.





Figure 1. Quirigua Stela C — East Side Inscription - Creation Text (ca. A.D. 740)


**A1**  Creation/Date of Beginning  
By the Power of the Spoken Word


**B1**  3 Stones Were Placed

**C1**  Placed/Set Stone Gods \*ICTP/Place Throne

**C2**  Placed/Set Stone God \*ICTP/Place Throne

**C3**  \*ICTP Stone God Place \*ICTP/Throne

**B2**  at the 3-stone place (heaven) \*It Came To Pass

**A2**  Date of activities ending  
Who caused it to be done/Raised-up Sky Lord

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Based on handout from Nicholas Hopkins at the Thirteenth Annual Maya Weekend at the University of Pennsylvania, April 1995. Color added for clarity.

**Holy Scriptures**

It would appear that many of the chiasmic structures were lost when the Bible was translated into the King James English.


One example of chiasmic structure can be found in 1 Timothy 2:4-6.

- a. **Who is willing** to have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth
- b. which is in **Christ Jesus**, who is the Only Begotten Son of God,
- c. and ordained to be a **Mediator between God and man**;
- d. who is **one God**,
- e. and **hath power over all men**.
- dd. For there is **one God**,
- cc. and one **mediator between God and men**,
- bb. the man **Christ Jesus**;
- aa. **Who gave himself** a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Others can be found in Matthew 13:12-17 and Philippians 4:12.

**Book of Mormon**

An example of a chiasm from the Book of Mormon can found in Mosiah 1:118-120 [3:18-19].

- a. Men drink **damnation** to their souls,
- b. except they **humble** themselves,
- c. and **become as little children**,
- d. and believe that salvation...is...**the atoning blood of Christ** the Lord omnipotent:
- e. for the **natural man**
- f. is an enemy to **God**,
- g. and **has been** from the fall of Adam,
- gg. and **will be** for ever and ever;
- ff. (unless) he yields to the... **Holy Spirit**,
- ee. and putteth off **the natural man**,
- dd. and becometh a saint, through **the atonement of Christ**, the Lord,
- cc. and **becometh as a child**,
- bb. submissive, meek, **humble**....
- aa. **inflict** upon him 



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# *glyph quotes* Be wise in the days of your probation.....

~ Mormon 4:94-95 [LDS 8:28-29]

By Eric English

With the level of infiltration of sin in our society and how much we seem to be “ripening in iniquity” of late, I often find myself returning to the writings of Mormon and Moroni. There are many similarities between their situation and ours as they too witnessed their people rejecting God’s counsel and embracing sin. Near the end of The Book of Mormon, Mormon’s son Moroni takes over the completion of the record. In the fourth chapter of Mormon, Moroni imparts many things to us. He advises us to be wise in the days of our probation. The reminder is that these are the days of our probation. We realize that our life is a time of choosing (probation) our eternal destiny. Our time on earth is a time to prepare for that destiny and to prove our choice through our actions.

Moroni gives a clear, step by step checklist for what we should do in our life to find wisdom. The **first challenge** he gives is to strip ourselves of uncleanness—difficult, but truly the perfect starting point for rejecting sin before we can hope to experience God’s presence, which is the ultimate source for all wisdom. **Second** is an admonition that

we don’t seek for worldly goods and blessings for selfish reasons. How prevalent is this behavior today, both without and within the church. Our nation is so richly blessed, and yet we remain so selfish and self-absorbed and willingly blind of the needs of others.

**Third**, Moroni challenges us to resist temptation and instead serve God. Trying to resist temptation can be extremely challenging, but if we fill our lives with service to others, God gives us more and more strength to do what’s right. **Fourth** comes the intriguing guidance from Moroni that we are to do all things in life in worthiness. He defines this as doing it in Jesus’ name for His sake. So, our service to others should be enlightened and grounded by doing all things in His name. **Finally**, Moroni ends with the direction that our probation must be infused with endurance. If we think that our life of probation will be proof of our choice to submit to Him but that it isn’t a lifelong choice that must last through the remainder of our days, then we are mistaken, and risk being cast out at the final judgement. But if we follow Moroni’s counsel and advice, we’ll have greater wisdom for all of our days here on earth. 