

# **Dr. Knut Heim, Proverbs, Session 7, Metaphors and Personified Wisdom, Part 2**

## **6-min. Video Overview**

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Okay, so get this. Have you ever heard a voice that speaks from before the beginning of time? No, seriously. In the ancient book of Proverbs, there's this mysterious female figure who does exactly that.

She calls herself Wisdom, and she claims she was right there, at God's side when the whole universe was born. So who is she? I mean, really. Let's dive in and try to unlock the secrets of this Lady Wisdom.

All right, so here's our game plan for solving this ancient puzzle. First, we're going to tackle the mystery of Lady Wisdom head-on. Then we'll look at an old key, the old way of thinking about this stuff.

After that, we'll uncover a new key, which honestly changes everything. We'll go all the way back to the dawn of time, unpack the real power of ambiguity, and then, and this is the big one, we'll see why any of this matters to you and me right now. So, yeah, this is the big question, isn't it? Who is this mysterious woman? I mean, think about it.

We're talking about a text written thousands of years ago, and suddenly, this powerful, articulate woman steps onto the stage of creation itself. She's not some side character. Nope.

She's right there in the middle of it all. So what's she all about? You know what? Let's just, let's hear from her directly. Wow.

So that's her voice. She's claiming she was there before the mountains, before the oceans. She says she was the very first of God's acts.

I mean, for centuries, people have been scratching their heads over this. Is this just, you know, pretty poetry, a nice flourish, or is she something more? To even begin to answer that, we have to understand the tool that was used to create her in the first place, and that tool is metaphor. Okay, so for a really long time, scholars had this one particular way of looking at metaphors.

We're going to call it the old key, and they basically saw it as a simple tool, kind of like a looking glass. Yeah, the biblical scholar G.B. Caird summed it up perfectly. The idea here is that a metaphor is just something you look through to see the real thing, right? And once you've seen that real thing, well, you don't need the lens anymore.

You can just toss it. It served its purpose. But if you think about it, this view has a pretty startling consequence.

I mean, if a metaphor is just a pretty ornament, then lady wisdom, she's just decorative wrapping paper for a much simpler idea, like God is wise. This is why scholar Dr. Knut Haim actually calls this view terrifyingly misleading, because it just completely misses the point. It treats the metaphor like it's disposable, when really, it's the most essential part.

And that brings us to a huge shift in how we understand all this, really, and how our minds work. This is the new key, and it doesn't see metaphor as some static lens you look through. Oh no, it sees it as a dynamic process, a journey that our minds actually go on.

And the difference between these two views is that it's night and day. The old key says a metaphor is ornamental, right? A disposable tool you just look through. But the new key, it says the metaphor is essential.

It's the actual vehicle of thought. It's something you have to travel with. So the goal isn't to see past the metaphor and throw it away.

The goal is to hop in and engage with the journey. This all leads to a really crucial concept that Dr. Haim calls metaphoricity, and it's a game changer. The idea is that the metaphor isn't just describing a thought.

The metaphor is the thought. Its value is baked right in. You can't get rid of it.

You literally can't separate the metaphor from the meaning, because if you do, the meaning just falls apart. So how does this whole journey thing actually work? Well, think of it as a literal train of thought. A metaphor invites you to come aboard.

Then you're off, traveling down these tracks that are already laid out by the metaphor itself. And as you go, the journey changes how you see everything. And here's the cool part.

When one train has taken you as far as it can go, you might just hop off and get on another one to keep the exploration going. Okay, so now we're armed with this powerful new key, right? Metaphor as a journey. So let's go back to our mystery.

Let's go back to Lady Wisdom at that pivotal moment, at the dawn of creation, and see what this new key can unlock. All right, here it is. The verse that has had people stumped for ages.

She was beside God like a master worker. But that little phrase in the original Hebrew, it is packed with so much meaning. It's incredibly, and I think, intentionally rich.

And this right here is the heart of the mystery. That one phrase. It just opens up a whole universe of possibilities.

So what was she? Was she an active participant? A craftsman? Was she a beloved child being cared for? Or was she a loyal companion, just faithfully there? So the key, the real secret, is a single Hebrew word, Oman. And this one word can be translated in all these different ways. It could mean master worker, making wisdom sound like an architect.

Or it could mean ward or nursing, which paints a picture of a child being raised. It could even be an adverb, faithfully. Now the old key, the lens method, it would force us to pick just one.

But the new key, oh, the new key invites us to do something way more radical. Because here's the thing, the answer to our mystery isn't about picking the right translation and eliminating the others. No, it's about embracing all of them, all at once.

That ambiguity, it's not a problem we need to solve. It is the point. You see, the journey this metaphor takes us on isn't to a single, neat destination.

It's a journey straight into complexity. The original writer doesn't want us to choose: is she a child or a craftsman? No, the writer wants us to hold both of those ideas in our head at the same time, to experience the mental reality of her being both, and even more, all at once. And that is the big reveal.

That's the key unlocking the whole thing. Lady Wisdom isn't an architect, or a child, or a companion. She is the divine architect, and the beloved child, and the faithful companion.

The metaphor creates a new reality that you just can't break down into smaller pieces. It's a truth that's just too big for one simple definition. She is all of it.

Okay, so, an ancient poem. Pretty cool. But why does any of this actually matter to us today? Well, here's why.

Because the way this ancient metaphor works, that's exactly how our own brains work. Every. Single.

Day. I mean, modern cognitive science totally backs this up. Metaphors aren't just for poets.

As the researcher Raymond Gibbs puts it, they are both ordinary and spectacular. And we use them all the time, without even thinking about it, right? We talk about attacking an argument, or wasting time. Those are metaphors.

But here's the thing. Metaphors are not just words we use. They are the vehicles of thought that create our understanding.

The metaphors we live by, the ones we choose, or maybe the ones that are chosen for us. They don't just describe reality; they actively build it. They shape what we notice, what we value, and what we think is even possible.

So that leaves us with one final thought. A question for you to take with you. What powerful metaphors are shaping your reality right now? Is life a battle to be won? A journey to be savored? Is a career a ladder to be climbed, or a garden to be cultivated? Really think about it.

Because understanding the metaphors you live by is the first step toward choosing them. And in the end, choosing your metaphors is choosing your reality.