

It is expressed many times and in many different ways that God's mind and intelligence are infinite. In Rom 11:33-34, for instance, we read, "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" Ps 147:4 says, "His understanding is infinite." Now this presents a problem. How can God tell us his truth and make us understand what he is really talking about? He has an infinite vocabulary, and we have a very small finite one. So many of the ideas he would like to express must be brought down to our level, and put into ideas that we can understand. Let me make the point clear that what I have said in no way limits God: we are the limiting factor.

The exact relationship between Christ and the church is something that is taught very diligently in the Bible, and I would like to talk about the different analogies, or symbols that are used in the New Testament to describe this relationship. Each one helps us in our understanding of the full picture of what Christ actually means to us. First of all, in John 10:1-16 Jesus is described to us as the shepherd of the flock, and in Matt 9:12 Jesus describes himself as a physician. To me, these examples show the healing and protecting properties of Christ. In John 15:1-9 we read that He is the vine and we are the branches, and in 1 Pet 2:4-8 we find that Christ is the chief cornerstone in a building which is the church. This represents the support and nourishment that we receive from Christ. In Hebrews we read of the great High Priest, Jesus, and in 1 Pet 2:9 we see that we are all priests, but Christ is at the throne of God mediating for us or defending us; speaking for us in our sin. In Eph 1:22 we read that Jesus is the head of a body which is designated as the church, and we see that he is our authority, a property that rules us and also unites us. And perhaps the most beautiful figure, in Eph 5:25 the relationship between Christ and the church is described as like the love that exists between a man and his wife. Each of these qualities expressed, we must realize, is actually much greater than we can imagine.

This study to me emphasizes the wonderful nature of Christ, and the true beauty of the Christian life. To me it is as if it is an umbrella has opened above us. God says that he causes the rain to fall on the just as well as the unjust, but to the just there is provided this umbrella. God will either protect us physically or help us in our attitudes so that we don't think of physical things; but he will take care of us. Now, if it is raining, and you're standing out in it, and someone offers you an umbrella, won't you take it? We must have enough sense to get in out of the rain.