

This incident on the Emmaus road is described in Luke 24. Before these disciples knew who was talking with them they expressed their disappointment that the One who they thought would redeem Israel had been crucified. Jesus had on several previous occasions explained that He would be killed as a sacrifice for sin and that He would be raised from the dead, but the disciples had not remembered His words. Having taught them methods of careful interpretation of the Bible, He felt that they should have understood that the coming sacrifice of the Son of God was the great theme of the Old Testament. When they showed that they had utterly failed to comprehend these matters He turned to them and said: "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" (Luke 24:25-26).

If Jesus rebuked the disciples so strongly for not having correctly understood these matters from the Old Testament, surely He would have been even more irritated if, forty days later, after He had devoted a substantial part of this time to discussing the kingdom of God, they showed by their question that they had an utterly false idea of what He meant by this term.

However, Jesus did not show any irritation at the fact that the disciples asked this question. He did not say that the question showed a complete lack of understanding of the nature of the kingdom. His answer did not say or imply any such thing. The fact that they asked such a question at this time, and that He did not rebuke them for it, is surely conclusive evidence that what He had taught about the kingdom of God was not in line with either of these two ideas that are so widespread today, but was, instead, in line with the clear teaching of the Old Testament that the time is coming when the Messiah Himself will set up on earth a great universal kingdom in which there will be absolute freedom from external danger.

In answer to the disciples' question Jesus did not even suggest that the question involved any misunderstanding of His purpose. Instead He said: "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power."