

Amos 8: 1 - 12  
Psalm 52  
Colossians 1: 15 – 28  
Luke 10: 38 – 42

### Notes on the Gospel Lesson

This passage from Luke does not identify the home of Martha and Mary, merely referring to it as “a certain village”. However, the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter of John’s Gospel names Bethany as the home of these two sisters. The village of Bethany is known today as Eizariya or “the village of Lazarus”, the modern Arabic name commemorating the raising of Jesus’ friend, the brother of Mary and Martha. The village sits on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. It is marked in the photo at right, which was taken of the Mount of Olives from the south.



Martha and Mary are generally imagined as grown women. However, they were living in the same household, in their brother’s home. This demonstrates conclusively that the two sisters were unmarried. Daughters in first century Israel were almost always married as soon as they reached child-bearing age; usually when they were thirteen or fourteen years old. Although it is not impossible that these two sisters were an exception, it certainly would have been unusual. Most likely, these two sisters were adolescents at the time they knew Jesus.

This fact makes the next aspect of the story even more remarkable. Verse 39 says that Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet”. This is not a literal description of one’s physical position. It is rather a phrase that means that one is a disciple (see Luke 8:35 and Acts 22:3). Not only did Jesus accept Mary as a disciple in spite of the fact that she was a woman, a thing which was almost unheard of, but he accepted her in spite of her age.

It is worth noting that although Martha is the sister whom Jesus gently rebukes in this passage, it is her faith that stands as a shining example after Lazarus’ death. It was Martha who said to Jesus, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”