

Also Human  
Mark 11:1  
Charlie Brackett

Having passed by Jericho, Jesus and His disciples continued their journey on toward Jerusalem. As they approached the city they came in the vicinity of two villages, Bethphage and Bethany. Bethany was the larger and, to us, the better known. There Jesus most likely made his home base while in Judea just as He made His home at Capernaum while in Galilee. That is not to say that He stayed at either place very much for He was most often out traveling around the countryside teaching and healing. However, according to Luke's and John's gospels, while in and around Jerusalem Jesus repeatedly came back to Bethany and spent time in the home of Mary and Martha whose brother Lazarus He raised from the dead. It was just outside Jerusalem's walls, a walk of two miles or so.

There was, perhaps, another reason He returned often to Bethany. Bethany was nestled on, or next to, the Mount of Olives, that mountain which played such an important role in the life of Christ, especially during the last week. Luke 21:37 tells us that every day of that week He was teaching in the temple in Jerusalem, and every night He returned to "lodge at Olivet." Olivet is, of course, another name for the Mount of Olives.

The Garden of Gethsemane, a place of personal agony in prayer for the Lord, was on that mountain. John 18:2 says Jesus often met there with His disciples. It was in that Garden that Jesus was arrested and later ascended victoriously back to the Father in heaven.

I find it personally encouraging to think about Bethany and the mount of Olives in connection with the ministry of Jesus. They remind me of His humanity. He had friends. He liked to visit them and rest in comfortable surroundings after a difficult day teaching the people and debating with the leaders in Jerusalem. And He obviously thought it important to come back to familiar places such as the garden for prayer and meditation.

There's no question about it. Jesus was a man just as I am. He felt the same things. He had similar human needs. He was indeed as we are, qualified to intercede for us in pleading our case before the Father.