

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PREFACE

PART ONE — FROM BETHLEHEM TO CAESAREA PHILIPPI

1

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND A HERALD'S BIRTH 1

Introducing the coming one 1 • Announcing the birth of a herald 3 • The prospects for John 5 • Announcing the birth of the Messiah 7 • Private dialogue between Mary and Elizabeth 9 • The reactions of Joseph 12 • The birth of John the Baptist 15

2

THE MESSIAH'S BIRTH AND ITS IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCES 18

The Messiah is born 18 • Homage from shepherds 19 • Rites in the Jewish faith 23 • Recognition in the Temple precincts 24 • Homage from the orient: the astrologers arrive 26 • Stirrings at Herod's court 27 • Herod's child massacre 30

3

AT HOME AND IN THE WILDERNESS 32

The years in Nazareth 32 • The Temple visit 34 • A voice from the wilderness 36 • Stern words from the herald 38 • A unique baptism 39 • The tempting of Jesus 42 • The threefold test 44

4

THE FIRST EVENTS IN JUDEA AND CANA 47

A testimony from John 47 • The first disciples 49 • A domestic scene in Cana 51 • The cleansing of the Temple 53 • Dialogue with Nicodemus 57 • More dialogue and a monologue 59 • Jesus and John the Baptist 60

5

SETTLING IN CAPERNAUM 62

Passing through Samaria 62 • A growing awareness of the Messiah 64 • Again in Cana 66 • In the synagogue at Nazareth 68 • Calling men at Capernaum 70 • Healings at Capernaum 73 • Going about in Galilee 75

6

TEACHING AND TOURING 78

By a pool in Jerusalem 78 • A clash with religious authority 80 • A sample sermon 82 • Thoughts about the Law 84 • Some matters of personal piety 87 • Home again in Capernaum 90 • The call of Levi 91

7

JESUS AND A CROSS SECTION OF PEOPLE 93

Jesus' views about fasting 93 • The centurion's servant 94 • A funeral at Nain 97 • An inquiry from John the Baptist 99 • A testimony about John the Baptist 101 • Simon and the sinner 104 • Ministering women 106

8

MIRACLES AND MEN 108

Storm on Galilee 108 • Demoniacs at Gergesa 110 • A needy woman and a ruler's daughter 113 • Further miracles of healing 115 • The choosing of the Twelve 116 • The mission of the Twelve 118 • The way ahead for the Twelve 119

9

COMMENTS AND CLASHES 123

Cities under rebuke 123 • Praise and comfort 125 • A clash with the Pharisees in the grain field 127 • A clash with the Pharisees in the synagogue 130 • The Beelzebub controversy 131 • Satan meets his match 133 • Judging by results 135

10

PARABLES, OPINIONS, AND TRADITIONS 137

Seeking the spectacular 137 • New family relationships 138 • Why Jesus taught in parables 139 • A string of Kingdom parables 141 • A royal view of Jesus and of John the Baptist 145 • Direct criticism of Pharisaic traditions 146 • Comments to the people about the Pharisees 148

11

MIRACLES AGAIN 150

Jesus at Nazareth 150 • Feeding a multitude: the setting 152 • Feeding a multitude: the miracle 153 • Walking on water 155 • Satisfying food 156 • Faith from beyond Israel 158 • More healings in Galilee 160

12

TESTIMONY AND TRANSFIGURATION 163

Another feeding miracle 163 • More sign-seeking 165 • Caesarea Philippi—the turning point 166 • Jesus tells Peter about the Church 168 • A strong rebuke for Peter 170 • Terms for discipleship 171 • The transfiguration 173

13

QUESTS AND QUERIES 178

The question about Elijah 178 • Failure and faith 179 • Tax money from a fish 181 • Ambitions 183 • For and against 185 • Teaching about relationships 186 • Forgiveness 188

PART TWO — TOWARD JERUSALEM

14

SERVICE 190

Toward Jerusalem 190 • Teamwork with seventy 193 • Good neighborliness 194 • A home in Bethany 197 • Request for instruction in praying 198 • A story about the folly of wealth 200 • Watchfulness and loyalty 202

15

MORE TEACHING AND HEALING 204

The relevance of repentance 204 • The healing of a bent woman 207 • Dining out with the Pharisees 208 • The parable of the great banquet 210 • Two parables of searching and finding 212 • The prodigal son 213 • The sacred and the secular 215

16

DUTY, GRATITUDE, AND PRAYER 218

The abuse of wealth 218 • Jesus' view of duty 220 • An outsider's gratitude 221 • The Kingdom and the Coming 223 • Persistent petitioning 225 • Two sample prayers 226 • Reactions in Jerusalem 227

17

TEACHING FROM EVENTS 231

An attempted arrest and its results 231 • The adulterous woman 233 • Jesus, Light of the world 235 • The problem of privilege 236 • Light for blind eyes 238 • A pastoral allegory 240 • News of a friend's death 243

18

DEATH, DIVORCE, AND GENEROSITY 245

A family bereavement 245 • The defeat of death 247 • More teaching on divorce 250 • The Messiah and the children 251 • Wealth and spiritual inheritance 252 • The generosity of God 254 • Prediction and presumption 256

19

JERICO, BETHANY, AND JERUSALEM 259

Rejoicing in Jericho 259 • A tax collector's salvation 260 • Resources to use 263 • At Bethany 265 • A royal entry into Jerusalem 267 • The fig tree 271 • First scenes in the Temple 272

20

PARABLES AND QUESTIONINGS 275

The quest of the Greeks 275 • A horticultural parable 277 • A parable about wedding guests 279 • A question about tribute 280 • The silencing of Sadducees 283 • A question about the great commandment 284 • Jesus questions His critics 286

21

JUDGMENTS AND FOREBODINGS 288

A general assessment of the scribes and Pharisees 288 • Woes against religious abuses 289 • The real value of giving 291 • Ruins to come 293 • Glimpses into the future 296 • Parables for the interim 298 • Betrayed to His enemies 301

22

THE UPPER ROOM 303

Preparing for the Passover 303 • An example of humility 306 • Focus on Judas 308 • A promise and a prediction 309 • Themes from the upper room: the Paraclete 311 • Jesus as the Way 313 • Secrets of spiritual growth 314

23

THE PASSOVER AND THE PLOT 317

The birth of a sacred institution 317 • The Messiah's parting prayer 319 • Gethsemane 321 • Betrayal and arrest 324 • Before two high priests 326 • The Jewish council shows its true colors 328 • Denied by His own 330

24

THE TRIAL AND JUDGMENT OF JESUS 333

*The betrayer's remorse 333 • Before the Roman governor 334
• Before the Jewish king 336 • Jesus or Barabbas 338 • The
sentence of death 340 • The scourging and the mocking 342 •
The way to Calvary 343*

25

FROM GOLGOTHA TO THE EMPTY TOMB 347

*The place called Golgotha 347 • Some who saw Him die 348
• Words from the cross 350 • Accompanying events 352 • The
burial of Jesus 354 • The empty tomb 356 • News of the
risen Lord 358*

26

THE RISEN LORD 361

*A memorable conversation 361 • An interview with Peter 363
• Two appearances to the apostles 365 • A farewell message
367 • The Ascension 369 • The need for a pause 371 • The
appearance of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus 372*

SUBJECT INDEX 376

SCRIPTURE INDEX 383