

PRAISE FOR JESUS: GOD AMONG US

In Roger Hutchison's new book, *Jesus: God Among Us*, he reminds us that "a small child will lead [us]. It may involve a long and winding journey, but with cross held high, we will soon find our way home."

In this moment in history, we are all on a journey. For many, it may seem to be a journey of despair, of going nowhere, or worse, going backward to Egypt and enslavement. But in Roger's book, through Holy Scripture, visual art, and personal reflection, we are invited to remember that it is Jesus who is guiding us along the true and joyful journey. I have known Roger as a visual artist. In this new book, however, I have discovered he is also a dancer—moving effortlessly from Word to words, from image to reflection, and back again. It is not a solitary dance we are shown, but rather we are invited to join in the dance, to consider our own responses to Word and words, image and reflection.

This is a book for this time, a timeless reminder that the Incarnation continues to enliven our lives and our time. We are on a journey. *Jesus: God Among Us*, reminds us that the journey, while it may be long and winding, will lead all of us home, to the Incarnate God who is already in us and calling us again.

—*The Rt. Rev. Brian L. Cole, 5th Bishop of the Diocese of East Tennessee*

Roger's book *Jesus: God Among Us*, is a provocation of hope. The bold suggestive images combined with questions for reflection invite all of us to imagine; that we can let God's imagination flow through each of us in art, words, and actions. What a wonderful way to pray; to pray in hope.

—*Jamie Coats, Director of the Friends of the Society of St. John the Evangelist*

Part devotional, part study, and all heart, Hutchison's book *Jesus: God Among Us* engages the senses and the soul to discover the meaning of Christianity both in Jesus' time and in our modern world.

Relatable and starkly poignant, this book is beautiful in its simplicity. From calling into question the belongingness of refugees to sharing simple experiences from church on Sunday morning, Hutchison's work will invite, inspire, and stir both the imagination and moral center of all who encounter it. Intergenerational, holistic, and warm, this book will welcome and challenge modern Christians and seekers alike to encounter the Jesus that was, and still is.

With language simple enough to invite readers of any age but connections complex enough to stir the most seasoned souls, *Jesus: God Among Us*, is a treasure for all.

—*Emily Ainsworth Keniston, Christian educator*

Roger Hutchison creates sacred, breathtaking art out of ordinary images like dishwater and fingernail polish. His reflection questions invite deep contemplation. I will pray my way through this collection again.

—*The Rev. Elizabeth Felicetti, Rector, St. David's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia*

Roger Hutchison's beautiful book uses both words and images to paint a moving portrait of Jesus. He draws on the Gospel story—just as alive then as now—and invites the reader into the creative process by asking us where we see Jesus in our own life. In a grandmother's love? A child's innocence? The mirror? At its heart, Hutchison's book is an invitation for us to live the story and reflect the image of *Jesus: God Among Us*.

—*Paige Britt, best-selling children's author of Why Am I Me?*

ROGER HUTCHISON

J E S U S
G O D A M O N G U S

Copyright © 2018 by Roger Hutchison

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the written permission of the publisher.

Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations contained herein are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Church Publishing
19 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016
www.churchpublishing.org

Cover art: *The Life of Christ* by Roger Hutchison
Design and layout by Paul Soupiset

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hutchison, Roger, author.

Title: Jesus : God among us / Roger Hutchison.

Description: New York : Church Publishing, 2018.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017040103 (print) | LCCN 2017046529 (ebook) | ISBN 9781640650022 (ebook) | ISBN 9781640650015 (pbk.)

Subjects: LCSH: Jesus Christ—Biography. | Jesus Christ—Art.

Classification: LCC BT301.3 (ebook) | LCC BT301.3 .H88 2018 (print) | DDC 232—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2017040103>

to

You . . .

The healers

The creators

The lovers

+

The peacemakers.

“Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

—John 13:33–35

CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

- I No Place (Luke 2:1–7)
- II Lost and Found (Luke 2:41–5)
- III The Heavens Were Opened (Matthew 3:13–17)
- IV Fish for People (Matthew 4:18–22)
- V Great Crowds Followed Him (Matthew 4:23–25)
- VI What Sort of Man Is This? (Matthew 8:23–27)
- VII Let Anyone with Ears Listen (Matthew 13:1–9)
- VIII Do Not Be Afraid (Matthew 14:22–27)
- IX A Bright Cloud Overshadowed Them (Matthew 17:1–8)
- X Leave Her Alone (John 12:1–8)
- XI Sitting on a Donkey’s Colt (John 12:12–15)
- XII Go into the City (Matthew 26:18–20)
- XIII You Cannot Come (John 13:33–35)
- XIV You Will Be with Me in Paradise (Luke 23:39–43)
- XV He Breathed His Last (Luke 23:44–56)
- XVI Peace Be with You (Luke 24:30–53)

Afterword

FOREWORD

There is a familiar tale of a kindergarten student hard at work with her crayons and a piece of paper after her teacher asked the students to draw a picture of someone they love. As the teacher walked up and peeked at her work, she asked the girl whose image she was drawing. Without stopping her work, the girl answered with one word: “God.” Trying not to let her amusement be too obvious, the teacher gently reminded her, “But no one knows what God looks like.” Looking up, the girl replied, “They will when I’m done.”

Thankfully, we do have a very good picture of what God looks like. Just look at Jesus. As it says in the New Testament, in the Epistle to the Colossians (1:15), Jesus “is the image of the invisible God,” so if we want to know what God looks like, we can begin with “the Word become flesh,” Jesus. And if we want to show the world around us what God looks like, then we must reflect in our own lives the same loving, liberating, and life-giving way that we see in Jesus as revealed throughout the Gospels.

Roger Hutchison’s book, *Jesus: God Among Us*, offers all who would be part of the movement Jesus inaugurated—as well as any who are simply curious and want to know more about who this Jesus is—a wonderful glimpse into the Gospels. Hutchison takes a moving piece of personal artwork and breaks it down into pieces to serve as the lenses through which to view various biblical stories of Jesus. But he doesn’t stop there, as we also find reflections both inspiring and challenging to our own world and our own situations.

Do you want to know Jesus better? Do you want to follow the way of Jesus more closely in your own life? Do you want to give your life more fully to the way, the cause, the Jesus Movement in our world today? Then Roger Hutchison’s new book (a worthy successor to his earlier work, *Under the Fig Tree: Poems and Images for Lent*) is well worth reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting.

The Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry

INTRODUCTION

Jesus: God Among Us is my attempt at sharing with you the sometimes pivotal, oftentimes ordinary, moments where I've glimpsed Jesus's face or experienced his presence firsthand.

Jesus isn't just what was. Jesus is here now.

You don't have to look very far to see that our world is in crisis. Racism, violence, injustice, inequity, bigotry, and hatred—these are the headlines. For many it is the reality they are faced with every day.

It seems to be getting worse.

Being an artist and writer, I believe that both word and art carry incredible power.

So I got to work.

I read my Bible, painted with my fingers, and wrote down the words that you now hold in your hand.

Please join me for this personal and hope-filled journey.

Our world is in crisis, but you don't have to look very far to see that the "love that passes all understanding" is with us now and will never leave us.

This is a love that can right the ship in the midst of any storm.

This love is Jesus.

God among us.

*Roger Hutchison
Houston, Texas
June 15, 2017*

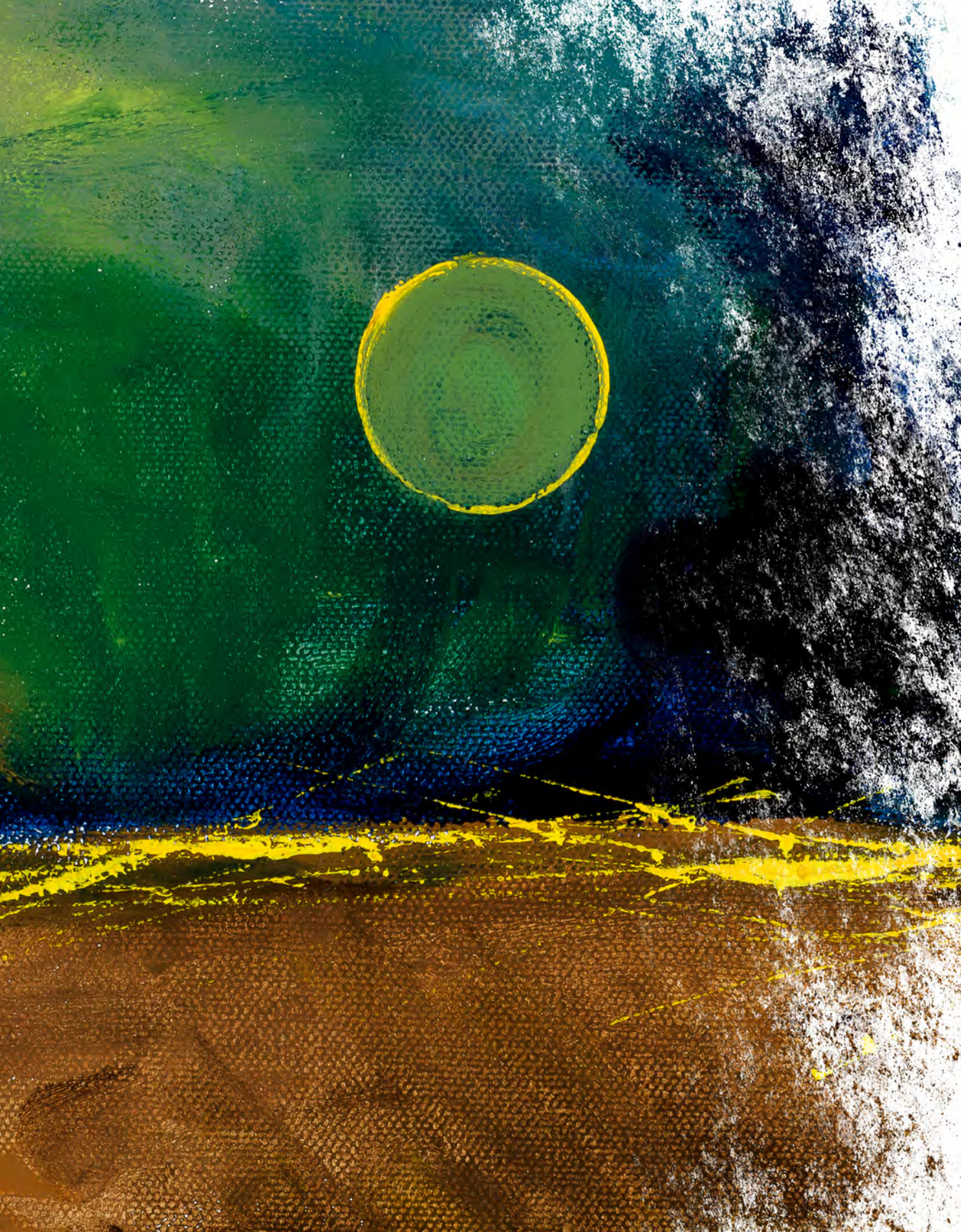




I. NO PLACE

In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

LUKE 2:1-7





THEN

She was tired, yes, but strong, determined, and brave.

She gave birth to her son surrounded
by curious barn animals and laid him in a manger.
Joseph stayed with her, keeping watch throughout the night.

No place. No room for them in the inn.
No midwife or nurse to clean and
care for her and the baby.

Fear could have overwhelmed; anticipation,
joy, and awe kept dread at bay.

There may have been no place for them in the inn
or in Nazareth, but with the birth of their son,
they found their place . . . on the run,
in a barn, cradling their new son . . .

The young child cried out in the night.

Love incarnate pulled closely
for mother's milk and warmth.

NOW

It was time for her baby to be born.

She was excited and scared to death.

She was prepared but not ready.

She and her husband were on the run; strangers in a new country with no place to call home. With the little money they had, they were able to find a basic hotel room. Through the generosity of the manager, they were able to have enough to eat and felt safe—most of the time.

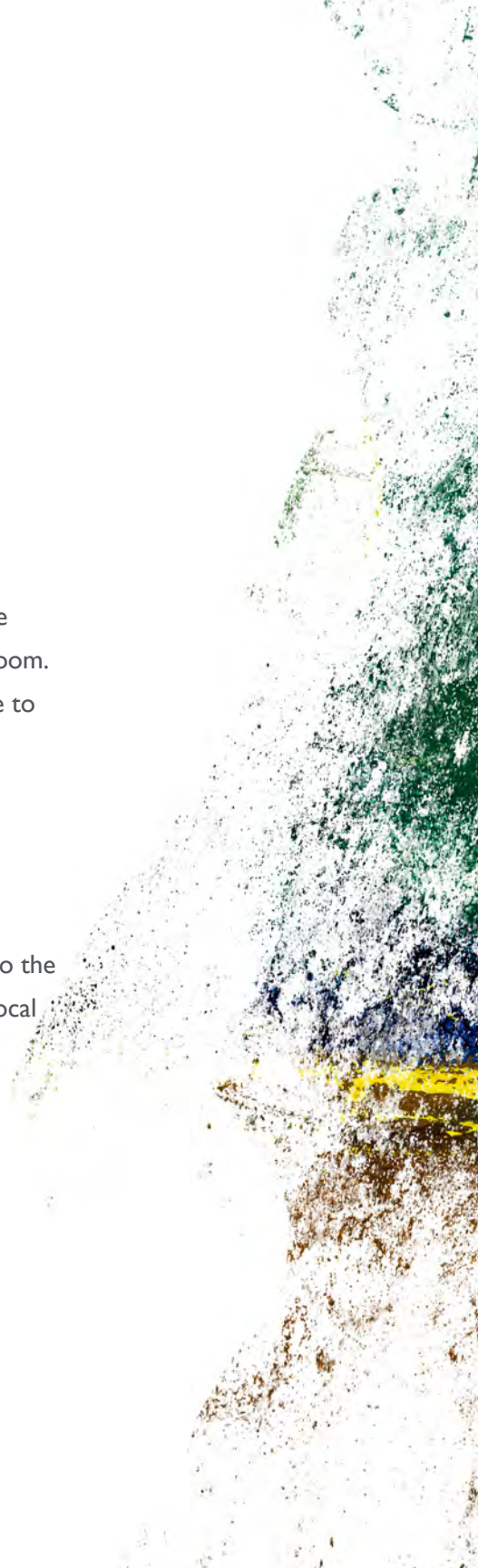
Her water broke and she knew it was time.

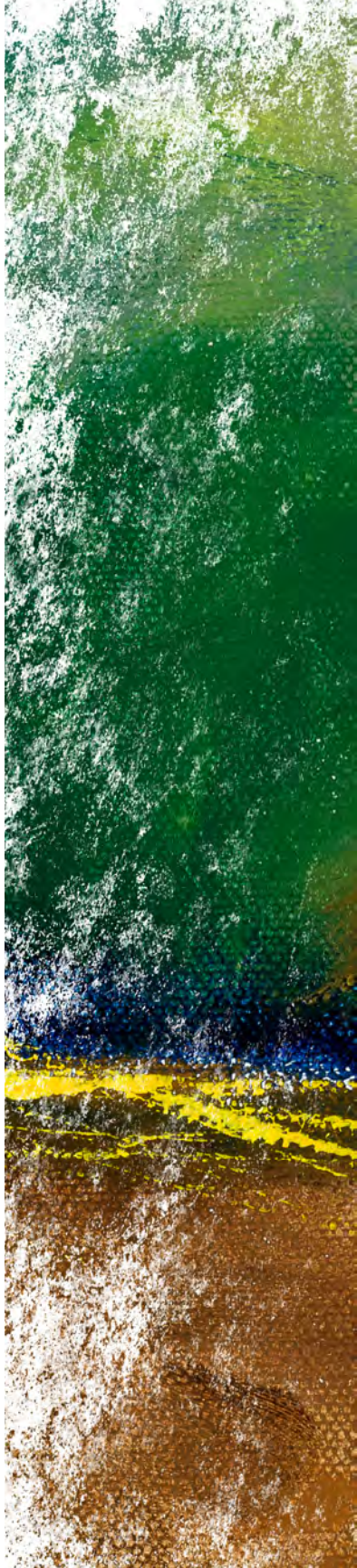
Her husband ran to get help.

Her husband put his arm around her and walked her to the stranger's car. The kind stranger rushed them to the local hospital, where soon after their daughter was born.

The newborn cried out in the night and they knew their lives would never be the same.

The young mother cradled her daughter close, said a prayer, and quietly sang a lullaby—the same lullaby her mother sang to her many moons and miles ago.





FOR REFLECTION

Have you ever experienced
a “No Place”?

Where do you find safety?