

Here you may see how several of the Prophets and the Apostles were Shepherds, Husbandmen, and Tradesmen, who preached the word of God, and set forth his glory, and were despised and persecuted by the world, and the ministers of the letter without life.

By George Fox

Righteous Abel was a keeper of sheep, or a shepherd; and by faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, and dwelt in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for they looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker was God. Heb 11:9-10.

So these did not build great outward cities, but kept great flocks of cattle, and dwelt in tabernacles; and Abraham was the father of the faithful, and in Isaac was the seed called, for he was the seed of the promise. Gen 21:12.

And [to] Jacob [Essau] sold his pottage, Gen 25:19,30-31. And Jacob the second birth was a keeper of sheep, for he kept Laban his father-in-law's sheep twenty years. Gen 31:41. And Rachel kept her father Laban's sheep, and watered them, and Jacob helped Rachel to water them, and rolled away the stone. So those two, Jacob and Rachel, married one another; and Jacob, the second birth, rolled away the stone that the sheep might drink. As the first uncircumcised birth stops the well, but the good nature opens them, and it naturally, and the divine nature does it divinely.

When Moses was full forty years old, he fled from Pharaoh into the land of Midian to Jethro. And Jethro had seven daughters, and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's sheep; and Moses sat at the well, and the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And Jethro sent for Moses, and he went to him, and married Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, and kept his sheep. And when forty years were expired, the Lord appeared to Moses in the wilderness of Mount Sinai and Horeb, in a flame of fire in a bush. Acts 7:23, 30, Exod 3:2. So Moses kept sheep forty years, for he was forty years old when he departed out of Egypt, and fled from Pharaoh; and he was eighty years old when he left Jethro his father-in-law, and when he came into Egypt to speak to Pharaoh, to let the children of Israel go out of Egypt, to worship and serve the Lord. Moses was forty years keeping the Lord's people, the children of Israel in the wilderness, and he was Jethro's shepherd for forty years, keeping and watering the sheep of his father-in-law; and forty years the Lord's shepherd, keeping of his people, and watering them, as before. And David was a shepherd, and kept his father's sheep in the wilderness. And the Lord called him from keeping and feeding of outward sheep, to feed his people the children of Israel. 2 Sam 7:8. And thus said the Lord of hosts, 'I took you from the sheep-cotes, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people Israel.' And as the Lord called Jacob from keeping Laban's sheep; so the Lord called Moses from keeping of Jethro's sheep, to feed and keep his sheep, and his people.

Elisha was a ploughman, and when he was ploughing with his servants, and his twelve yoke of oxen, he forsook them, and obeyed the Lord, when he called him to be his spiritual ploughman, to plough up the fallow ground of their hearts. 1 Kings 19:19. And Amos said, 'I was an herdsman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit, or wild figs; and the Lord took me as I followed the flock; and the Lord said unto me, go and prophesy unto my people Israel.' Amos 7:14-15.

And the words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoah, which he saw concerning Israel, were, 'The Lord will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn.' Amos 1:1-2. And you may read the book of Amos, and see how the Lord caused him to declare many dreadful prophecies, not only to the Jews, but to other countries and nations. So the Lord made him his herdsman, and to gather his fruit, and to watch over his people.

And as Jesus was walking by the sea of Galilee, he saw Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers, 'And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men; and they straightway left their nets and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw James and John, two sons of Zebedee, in a ship with their father, mending their nets, and Jesus called

them, and they immediately left their ship and their father with their hired servants, and followed Jesus.' Mat 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20.

And Christ did make these fishers of men, and they did fish them out of the great sea, the world; and sometimes they did drag out of the sea of the world, some thousands at a time; as you may see about three thousand was converted at one time, in Acts 2:41. Though the Jews, priests, rulers, and elders, did with all their power and might, keep men in their sea, however, the number of those who did believe, and heard the word, were about five thousand men. Acts 4:1-5.

And Christ said, 'that the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which when it was full, they drew to the shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.' Mat 13:47-48.

And do not you read of Simon Magus, Acts 8:10-23; and Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1, and Nicolas,* Acts 6:5. And were not these drawn out of the sea and then after cast away. But what a glorious work they did, that Christ made fishers of men, and gave them a net that would hold and never want mending—his power; for they were to preach the gospel to all nations, and to every creature. So their net, the power of God, would reach over the sea, the whole world, to gather the good, and cast away the bad.

*The time of Fox obviously knew more about Nicolas than what was and is in Acts 6:5. Today there is speculation that Nicolas later led a schism which initially denied the body, but evolved to denying any importance to the body, licensing the satisfying of the flesh — which became the Nicolaitians that Jesus spoke of his hatred for their practices in Revelation.

The apostle Paul met with Aquila and Priscilla at Corinth, and because Paul was of the same craft, he abode with them and worked, for by their occupation they were tent makers. Acts 18:1-3.

But did not Paul bring many to the grace and truth, and power, and spirit of God in their hearts; who turned them from darkness, to the light of the gospel of Christ; and from the power of Satan to God; and so brought them to the inward tent and pavilion, where dwells the grace, truth, spirit, and light of Christ, by which they receive him to rule in their hearts by faith.

'And the Jews said of Christ, where has this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is this not not tthe carpenter's son, and is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joses, Simon and Judas, and his sisters, are they not all with us? Where then has this man all these things?' Mat 13:54-56.

And again, the Jews said, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Judas and Simon; and are not his sisters with us? and the Jews were offended at Christ Jesus.' Mark 6:2-3.

'And the Jews marveled, saying, how knows this man letters, having never learned? And Jesus said unto them, my doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.' John 7:15-16.

Here you may see, that the professing Jews called Christ the carpenter, and the carpenter's son. But Christ does build up the fallen state of Adam and Eve, who fell from the righteousness, and holiness, the image of God that he made them in. Christ does renew them up in the image of God again in righteousness and holiness; and so are built up a spiritual house, and Christ a son is over his house. 'And so he shall build the old waste places; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations, and you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the paths to dwell in.' Isaiah 58:12.

Moses said, 'I have led you forty years in the wilderness, your clothes have not worn out upon you, and your shoes have not worn out upon your feet.' Deut 29:5.

And it was said to the tribe of Asher, 'Your shoes shall be as iron and brass, as your days, so should your strength be.' Deut 33:25.

Now this was the condition of the children in the wilderness, in the old covenant and testament; their outward clothes and shoes did not grow old. And here you may see that Moses led God's flock, his people forty years.

And now in the new covenant and testament, all the children of light, have the light of life, and walk in the same, and are led by Christ; their 'feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,' which 'gospel is the power of God unto salvation, unto everyone that believes.' Eph 6:15, Rom 1:16.

And they are shod with the gospel, the power of God; the power of God will never grows old; shoeing with brass, iron, or leather, that will grow old, and wear away; and to be clothed with the fine linen, the righteousness of Christ, that clothing will never grow old. So, I say, many have been shod with the gospel, the power of God, in this age, and their feet have not slipped, but have gone over the rocks in foul and stormy weather being shod with what will abide all weathers, and all rough and thorny places; for the gospel is over all, and those who are shod with it stand sure.

Here you may see what men they were in the eyes of the world, who exalted the glory of the Lord, and spread his name and truth abroad; and many others might be instanced in the scriptures.

In the temple of the Lord, everyone speaks of His glory. Psalm 29:9. And therefore keep in the temple, knowing that your bodies are the temples of the holy ghost.

By faith, Noah being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith, and was not Noah a husbandman?

George Fox