

2014

## Proper 11 • Isaiah 44:6–8 • July 20, 2014

Tony Cook

*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*, [cooka@csl.edu](mailto:cooka@csl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholar.csl.edu/cj>

 Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Cook, Tony (2014) "Proper 11 • Isaiah 44:6–8 • July 20, 2014," *Concordia Journal*: Vol. 40: No. 2, Article 16.

Available at: <http://scholar.csl.edu/cj/vol40/iss2/16>

This Homiletical Help is brought to you for free and open access by Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Concordia Journal* by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

Isaiah 44:6–8 is nestled within a larger discourse of the chapter that glorifies the God of creation over the idols made by man, while reminding the reader that the Creator God is also a redeeming God. Below are three approaches to preaching this text. Each one utilizes the text and the surrounding context to explore different facets of the overarching theme.

### **Approach 1: The God Who Formed Us**

This approach focuses on the repetition of the concept of formation. Verses 2 and 21 bracket the sermon by focusing on God’s formative work, while verse 9 shows the folly of the human formation of idols. The nonsensical nature of attempting to form a god from elements in creation is demonstrated by the work of the Creator God. Verses 2 and 21 emphasize both the mystery of God’s formative work within the mother’s womb and his continued formation of his people as servants. The stark contrast of verses 9–20 provides an excellent opportunity to proclaim the law of human folly as well as the powerlessness of the gods made by human hands. The final section of the sermon presents a powerful reminder that the Creator God is also a redeeming God who redeemed his people first through the shepherd Cyrus and ultimately through Jesus Christ.

- I. God Formed Us (44:1–2)
- II. We Form Gods (44:9–20)
- III. God is Forming Us (44:21–28)

### **Approach 2: Do Not Fear**

This approach focuses on Isaiah 44:1–8. The central message of this text is that Israel need not fear for they are the chosen servants of God and will be his witnesses. The admonition to not fear is found within two major sections. The first section (44:1–5) focuses on the confidence that Israel can possess as God’s chosen people and the blessings he gives. The second section (44:6–8) places Israel’s confidence in the nature and character of God for whom there is no equal. Extending the concept of not being fearful from Israel to the church through Christ can be done in a variety of ways through the use of texts such as Luke 12:32, John 14: 27, and Revelation 1:17. The choice of texts allows for changes in nuance depending on the context and community.

- I. Do Not Fear—I Have Chosen You (44:1–5)
  - A. Yahweh’s words to Israel
  - B. Christ’s words to us
- II. Do Not Fear—I Am the First and the Last (44:6–8)
  - A. Yahweh’s words to Israel
  - B. Christ’s words to us

### **Approach 3: Witnesses of the Living God**

This approach focuses on the comparison of the God of creation who formed man with the gods formed by man from what God has created. The text Isaiah 44:6-28 is the focus. While there are a number of comparisons that can be made between the God of Israel and the gods made from wood and stone, one of the more interesting juxtapositions is found in the use of the word “witness.” In the first section (44:6–8) God proclaims that his redeemed people will serve as his witnesses to his identity and faithfulness. The witnesses found in the second section (44:9–24) however, are dramatically different from God’s redeemed witnesses found in the first section. The witnesses in the second section are the blind and ignorant idols made by men. Not only do the idols made by men fail in their role as gods, they also fail as witnesses to the humans who created them. The passage exposes how those who make idols place themselves in the position of a creating god, but the creatures they create are nothing more than elements of creation fashioned in their own image. Man is redeemed by the God who made him, not by the gods man makes. This section concludes with a call to remember the Creator God and return to him surrounded by the witness of the earth itself. In the final section of the sermon, we turn to the living God that is Christ and our call to bear witness to him as the fulfillment of God’s redemptive promise.

- I. Witnesses of the Living God (44:6–8)
- II. Gods of the Living Witnesses (44:9–24)
- III. Living Witnesses of the Living God (Acts 1:6–11)

Tony Cook