

# 25-0427p - Detailed Summary

## 25-0427p - *Make Sure You're Barking Up the Right Tree*, John Nousek

Bible Reader: John Nousek

This detailed summary by Grok, xAI, (Transcription by TurboScribe.ai)

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

## Make Sure You're Barking Up the Right Tree

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 30:01)

### Scripture Reading

**Bible Reader: (0:04 - 1:27), John Nousek**

#### Revelation 1:1-3

John opens the evening service by expressing his honor in reading and preaching from God's Word. He introduces the sermon, titled "Make Sure You're Barking Up the Right Tree," a phrase he notes is less commonly used today but will be clarified through the sermon. He begins reading from Revelation 1:1, which describes the revelation given by God to Jesus Christ to show His servants events that will soon occur. This sets the stage for the sermon's focus on the divine authority and truth of Scripture.

### Summary

**Preacher:** John Nousek

#### (1:32 - 3:53) The Divine Authority of Scripture

John emphasizes the authenticity of the Book of Revelation as the Word of God, supported by its opening claim in Revelation 1:1-3. He highlights the blessing promised to those who read, hear, and keep the prophecy, noting its urgency with the phrase "the time is near."

To frame the Bible's divine authority, John uses the metaphor of bookends, comparing the beginning of Genesis (1:3, "Then God said, Let there be light") with the end of Revelation. He argues that both books affirm the Bible's divine origin, asserting that the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is God's Word and wholly reliable.

#### (3:53 - 6:47) Historical and Geographical Context of Revelation

John transitions to the historical and geographical setting of Revelation, noting that it begins with seven letters to churches in Asia Minor, modern-day western Turkey, also known as Anatolia. He provides a detailed description of Anatolia's geographical boundaries, referencing Encyclopedia Britannica to confirm its location, bordered by the Black Sea, Taurus Mountains, Mediterranean

Sea, Aegean Sea, and Sea of Marmara. John specifies that Revelation was written by the Apostle John from the island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9), emphasizing the tangible, historical reality of these locations. He expresses enthusiasm for the fact that these are real, visitable places, mentioning a friend's recent trip to Turkey to see the tomb of John, reinforcing the historical credibility of the text.

### **(6:48 - 8:34) Introduction to the Seven Churches**

John continues by focusing on the seven churches addressed in Revelation 1:4, located along the western edge of Turkey: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. He reads from Revelation 1:4-5, which offers grace and peace from God, the seven spirits, and Jesus Christ, described as the faithful witness, firstborn from the dead, and ruler over earthly kings. John underscores Christ's redemptive work, noting that He washed believers from their sins and made them kings and priests to God (Revelation 1:5-6). He highlights the churches' geographical arrangement, describing them as nearly aligned in a row, with some separated by a small mountain range.

### **(8:35 - 12:43) The Letter to Ephesus and the Nicolaitans**

John begins reading the letter to the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-6), where Christ acknowledges their good works, patience, and rejection of false apostles. However, He rebukes them for abandoning their "first love" (verse 4), urging repentance to restore their initial zeal for God, or risk losing their lampstand (symbolizing their witness). Despite this, Christ commends Ephesus for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which He also hates (verse 6). John explains that "Nicolaitan" derives from Greek words "niko" (to conquer) and "laos" (people), describing a heretical group that promoted compromise by blending Christian faith with pagan practices. This group's teachings encouraged believers to participate in sinful behaviors without repentance, a stance Christ vehemently opposed.

### **(12:44 - 18:46) Modern Nicolaitanism and Its Dangers**

John draws parallels between the ancient Nicolaitans and modern cultural trends, identifying four hallmarks of what he calls "modern Nicolaitanism." First, it lacks emphasis on holy living, promoting inclusiveness that accepts all lifestyle choices, even those contrary to biblical teaching, effectively dismissing the concept of sin and repentance. Second, it devalues doctrinal teachings, viewing the Bible as restrictive and using it only for inspirational or motivational purposes rather than as absolute truth. Third, it rejects biblical authority in favor of relativism, where truth becomes subjective and personal opinion overrides objective standards. Fourth, it embraces universalism, denying that Christ is the only way to salvation and promoting tolerance that includes all beliefs, even those contradicting Scripture. John warns that such teachings replace God's truth with social justice or feel-good messages, diluting the Bible's authority. He clarifies that God hates the deeds of the Nicolaitans, not the people themselves, urging believers to align their actions with biblical truth, as supported by Proverbs' teaching that a person's beliefs shape their actions.

## **(18:49 - 22:10) The Promise of the Tree of Life and Overcoming**

John concludes the letter to the church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:7), emphasizing the call to hear the Spirit's message and the promise for those who overcome: they will eat from the tree of life in God's paradise. He connects this to Genesis 2:9, where the tree of life is mentioned alongside the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, noting that unlike the latter, the tree of life was not initially forbidden to Adam and Eve. After the fall, God restricted access to the tree of life to prevent eternal separation in a state of disobedience. However, through Christ's redemptive work (Revelation 1:5), as the faithful witness who washed believers' sins in His blood, the tree of life is now accessible to those who overcome. John stresses that the Nicolaitans, with their compromising teachings, are not overcoming, and he highlights the warning to Ephesus to repent, coupled with encouragement for their rejection of the Nicolaitans' deeds.

## **(22:11 - 26:21) The Letter to Pergamos and Nicolaitan Deeds**

John reads the letter to the church in Pergamos (Revelation 2:12-16), described as the "compromising church" in his Bible's heading. Christ acknowledges their faithfulness despite dwelling where "Satan's throne" is, commending their steadfastness even amidst persecution, as exemplified by the martyr Antipas. However, Christ rebukes them for tolerating those who hold to the doctrine of Balaam, who enticed Israel to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and committing sexual immorality (Numbers 22), and for allowing Nicolaitan teachings, which Christ hates. John connects these deeds to the Nicolaitans, noting their similarity to Balaam's errors. He references Acts 15:28-29, where the apostles instructed Gentile converts to abstain from four things, including food sacrificed to idols and sexual immorality, two practices central to the Nicolaitans' errors. This underscores the seriousness of these sins, which were particularly addressed to ensure Gentile believers adhered to biblical standards.

## **(26:27 - 30:01) Call to Repentance and Choosing the Right Tree**

John revisits the rebuke to Ephesus for abandoning their first love (Revelation 2:4-7), reiterating the call to repent and return to their initial devotion, or risk losing their lampstand. He emphasizes that, unlike the post-fall period when the tree of life was guarded, Christ's sacrifice makes it available to those who repent and choose Him, being washed clean by His blood. Conversely, those who reject God's Word will not partake in this promise. John ties this to the sermon's title, "Make Sure You're Barking Up the Right Tree," urging believers to trust the Bible's truth over modern Nicolaitan-like teachings that promote compromise. He encourages Christians to maintain their love for Christ and urges non-Christians to obey God's Word through repentance and baptism for forgiveness of sins. John concludes by stressing that everyone's eternal destiny depends on their free will response to God's love, praising Jesus Christ for His redemptive work.