John 10:22-42; “What’s the Hold-Up?” – November 01, 2026

I. Welcome

A. Good morning! Ohayou gozaimasu! Welcome to Calvary Chapel Iwakuni. It’s great to be here with you all as we gather together to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ through the songs we sing, and now through the study of His word.

1. *Welcome any visitors and those streaming online*.

B. Before we get to our time of study this morning, let’s go ahead and dismiss our elementary aged children to their Sunday School classrooms.

C. And as the kids make their way out, will the rest of you please open up your Bibles and make your way to John chapter 10?

1. If you need to borrow a Bible this morning, feel free to reach down and borrow one of the Bibles situated underneath some of the chairs around you. We do think it is important for you to read the Bible for yourself and follow along in it as we make our way through it verse by verse.

D. This morning, our text is going to be John chapter 10 vs. 22-42. And the title of our study is going to be “**What’s the Hold-Up?**”

1. Today, at the conclusion of our service we will also take some time to come to the communion table to observe the Lord’s Supper.

2. My hope is that our time together in John ch. 10 will help prepare us for our time together in communion. That our time of communion would be blessed by the Lord and led by His Spirit.

3. We have a good-sized portion of Scripture to learn from this morning and a limited amount of time to do so, so let’s just jump right in.

4. Last week we covered the first 21 verses of chapter 10, this morning we’ll pick up from vs. 22 and make our way down to the end of the chapter in vs. 42.

5. Hopefully you have made it to John ch. 10 by now. If so, I’d like to ask you to rise to your feet in honor of God and His Holy Word.

6. I’m going to read through the entirety of our text from my Bible, do your best to follow along in your own. John the beloved disciple continues his gospel presentation with the following in vs. 22… (*R & P*)

II. John 10:22-24;

A. Our text opens up this morning telling us that it was wintertime during the Feast of Dedication and Jesus once again finds Himself in Jerusalem there at the temple.

1. Now, there is a break of time here between vs. 21 of last week’s text and verse 22 of this week’s text.

2. Last week we were still dealing with events that transpired over the last several chapters dealing with a separate feast; the Feast of Tabernacles.

a. It was all the way back in John chapter 7 when we started looking at the Feast of Tabernacles and all that happened during that week-long celebration.

b. The Feast of Tabernacles culminated on the 8th day of the feast with Jesus healing a blind man and teaching a lesson to the religious leaders about folds & flocks and sheep & shepherds.

i. Jesus taught them about Himself as the “door” of the sheep and how the only way to join His flock is through Him.

ii. He also spoke of Himself as the Good Shepherd; how He loves and cares for His sheep, how He knows His sheep and His sheep know Him, and even how He lays down His life for His sheep.

3. But now in vs. 22 we have fast-forwarded in time to the Feast of Dedication.

a. The Feast of Tabernacles occurred in the Fall, but the Feast of Dedication occurred in the early winter a little over 2 months after the Feast of Tabernacles.

b. So we are a little over 2 months into the future and Jesus is once again back in Jerusalem, back in the temple, there to celebrate the Feast of Dedication with His fellow Jews.

4. Now the Feast of Dedication is not one of the seven annual feasts that the children of Israel were given way back during the days of Moses.

a. In fact, it was a somewhat recent feast that had started after the rededication of the second temple around the year 164BC.

b. You see, what happened was the Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes had come to Jerusalem in the year 167BC and laid siege to the city of Jerusalem.

c. Eventually He took the city of Jerusalem and the temple. His desire was to try and Hellenize the Jews, to make them follow Greek customs and to hopefully use them to strengthen the weakening Seleucid Empire who was losing ground to the Roman Empire.

d. So, Antiochus Epiphanes takes the city and defiles the temple. He outlaws Judaism banning fundamental practices like circumcision, keeping the Sabbath, and other Jewish customs.

e. He sets up an altar to Zeus, the Greek god He claimed to be the physical manifestation of (his name Epiphanes was an epithet he gave himself which means “Manifest One”). He sets up this altar to Zeus within the temple and then begins to sacrifice pigs upon it, completely defiling the temple and forcing other Jews to join with him in offering these profane sacrifices to Zeus.

f. He even sends officials throughout the land forcing Jewish priests to offer these pagan sacrifices, but one such priest would not comply.

g. A Jewish priest by the name of Mattathias would not perform the sacrifice and instead killed the official Antiochus had sent and fled with his five sons into the Judean wilderness.

h. His sons would take up the charge, one in particular named Judas who earned the surname Maccabeus which is translated as "the hammer" in Aramaic.

i. Through guerilla warfare tactics he successfully led a revolt and eventually retook possession of the Temple and after doing so removed the pagan altars, cleansed the temple, and had the temple rededicated to the Lord in the year 164BC.

j. The rededication ceremony was meant to be an 8-day festival to make up for their missed Feast of Tabernacles which had passed two months prior.

k. Tradition states that during this rededication ceremony they could only find one small flask of pure olive oil which was just enough to burn for one single day.

l. The Talmud, the written account of the oral tradition, states that it would take eight days to make new olive oil, but instead of waiting they went ahead and lit the Menorah within the temple.

m. And tradition states that the oil miraculously lasted for 8 days instead of just one. And as such the Feast of Dedication is sometimes referred to as the Feast of Lights, or known more commonly today as the holiday, Hanukkah, which literally means "dedication" in Hebrew.

B. So, this is the scene. People are coming to Jerusalem to celebrate the rededication of the temple, the victory won by Judas Maccabeaus who defeated Antiochus Epiphanes the Seleucid king who claimed to be god.

C. People are filling the temple and Jesus is walking around in Solomon's Porch, which was a colonnade along the eastern side of the temple wall, and He is approached by the Jews, the religious leaders.

1. Not just approached, he is surrounded. The word used here is used to describe someone who is completely encircled. They were closing in on Him, trying to cut off any potential escape routes.

2. They surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do you keep us in doubt [your translation may read suspense]? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

a. In the Greek the phrase literally means "to lift or hold up a soul". What they are basically saying is "what's the hold-up?", "why are you keeping us in suspense", "waiting around"?

b. If you are the Christ, tell us plainly. Now, this word "if" is written in what is called a first class conditional sentence. First class conditional statements can also be translated as "since"; they carry the idea of something assumed to be true.

c. Now, that isn't to say that the Jews believed that Jesus was the Christ. But that they were trying to entrap Him. They were trying to get Him to incriminate Himself, to say something they could use against Him. "Since you are the Christ, go ahead and tell us plainly, stop beating around the bush", "come out and say it", sort of a thing.

3. Here is the thing that I think we need to realize and understand here as it relates to the Jews and their situation.

a. It **wasn't *a lack* of information** that caused them not to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. It was their unwillingness *to accept* the information that had already been presented to them.

b. If they would have followed the evidence and let the evidence lead them to the natural conclusion they would have understood who Jesus really was and they wouldn't have made such a huge mistake.

4. They had their own idea of who the Christ would be. They believed the Christ would be a military leader. They were looking for and awaiting another Judas Maccabeus, a military "hammer" that would come in and lead another revolt. They were looking for someone to come and lead a revolt against the Roman occupation; a conqueror who would liberate them and set up God's kingdom on earth.

5. Because of their own preconceived ideas and notions of who the Messiah would be, they automatically eliminate Jesus from contention because He doesn't fit their profile. But their profile was wrong, it was incomplete, they focused in upon only the parts that they wanted to see and disregarded the other parts.

a. The Old Testament Scriptures described the Messiah as the suffering servant. Isaiah 53 is the most widely known example. But there are others. Psalm 22 speaks of the Messiah who is pierced in his hands and feet while surrounded by mockers. Zechariah 12 speaks of the mourning of the people as they looked upon the one whom they pierced, Daniel 9 speaks about the anointed One who would be cut off from the land of the living.

b. The clues were there, they just ignored them because they didn't fit the description of what they thought and wanted the Messiah to be.

D. Well, let's continue in our text and see how Jesus responds to these Jews who have surrounded him there in the temple. Read vs. 25-30 with me.

III. John 10:25-30;

A. The religious leaders said "tell us plainly", Jesus' response was "I have".

1. Jesus has made several bold statements about His identity.

a. In John 2:16 when Jesus came in and flipped over the tables within the temple driving everyone out claimed that God was His Father. He yelled out, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise" (**Jn. 2:16**)

b. In chapter 4 of John when Jesus met with the woman at the well, she said, "'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*." (**Jn. 4:25-26**)

c. An entire Samaritan village came to understand that He was the Messiah stating, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." (**Jn. 4:42**)

d. In John 5 Jesus again claimed to a divine relationship with the Father saying, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." [And the Jews knew exactly what Jesus was saying for the very next verse says] "Therefore the Jews south all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God." (**Jn. 5:17-18**)

e. In chapter 8 Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (**Jn. 8:12**)

f. He said, "…if yo do not believe that I AM He [He is in italics, basically saying if you do not believe I AM the name God gave of Himself], you will die in your sins." (**Jn. 8:24**)

g. Later in chapter 8 again He said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM", again taking the name of God upon Himself in a bold declaration of who He is. (**Jn. 8:58**)

h. Jesus has made many statements about His identity as the Son of God sent by God as the long-awaited Messiah. But they didn't believe His words.

2. And since they didn't believe His words, Jesus then pointed to His works, as if to say if His words weren't enough, why not just look at the works He has done in the Father's name. They too testify to who He is; they bear witness of Jesus as the Christ.

   a. When John the Baptist was at a low point and he began to allow subtle doubts to start to creep in about Jesus and who He was as He awaited his own execution in prison, he sent his disciples to Christ to ask if He truly was the Messiah or not.

   b. Jesus said to John's disciples, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: the blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (**Mt. 11:4-5**)

   c. These were signs that were prophesied of that would come with the ministry of the Messiah. Isaiah 35 talked about these things pertaining to the Messiah, how "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing" (**Is. 35:5-6a**)

   d. Isaiah 61 reads, "The Spirit of the Lord god is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound;" (**Isa. 61:1**)

   e. Jesus at the outset of His earthly ministry in Luke's gospel is recorded as standing in the synagogue and reading directly from Isaiah 61 and stating, "today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." (**Lk. 4:21**)

   f. The things He did, the works and the signs were evidence of who He was. He was God's Son and the Jews Messiah.

3. Both the words He said and the works He did **<u>testified to His identity</u>** as the Son of God and the Jews Messiah. But they Jews denied both.

B. And in vs. 26 Jesus makes it clear why they do not believe His word, nor His works. It was because they were not of His sheep.

1. Jesus called out and His sheep responded, they came and followed Him, they departed the sheepfold of Judaism and entered into Jesus' flock under His watchful eye and loving heart as the Good Shepherd.

2. He had called out to the Jews, to the religious leaders, but they would not hear His word and would not follow Him thus proving that they were not His sheep.

3. For Jesus' sheep here His voice, and He knows them, and they follow Him according to vs. 27 of our text.

4. Jesus further describes His sheep stating how His sheep are given both eternal life and eternal security.

   a. Eternal life spiritually. Following Jesus doesn't mean you will become immortal and never die physically. He is speaking of spiritual life with Him forever in heaven.

      i. Jesus promises they will never ever perish. He uses the strongest negation possible here in the Greek, a double negative with the subjunctive. They will never ever, under any circumstances, perish; it is an impossibility. They are sealed for all of eternity as the Lord's.

   b. Eternal security in that no possible outside force could ever come in and take His sheep from His hands or the hands of His Father who are both holding on to His sheep.

      i. Nothing and no one can snatch His sheep out of God's grip upon us. We are secure in our status as His sheep.

      ii. This stands in contrast to those in Judaism who can be excommunicated by religious leaders who don't like what they have to say. You are ousted unless you toe the line and say and do as your told. The religious leaders leveraged this power against the people and made the people operate in fear.

iii. Jesus said there is absolutely no fear of outside influences ever being able to remove His sheep from His flock. It just won't happen, it too is an impossibility.

c. Vs. 28 is one of the greatest verses in the Bible that speaks of the eternal security of the true believer. Eternal life is secure in and through Christ and *His ability* to hold on to us; **it isn't based upon our ability to hold on to Him**.

d. Nothing and no one can snatch us out of the hands of the Almighty God, nor His Son. May we be comforted in knowing our future is secure in and through Jesus Christ.

5. When Jesus says "I and My Father are One." It should actually read, "I and the Father are one". "My" is in italics meaning it isn't in the manuscripts used for translation. However, the definite article is there. This isn't just Jesus' Father, that He is talking about it is *THE* One and only Father in heaven."

a. Jesus and the Father are one. Not that they are the same exact person, but that they are one in essence. They are united together. Their wills and desires are completely aligned. They act as One. There was no separating the two of them, or dividing them against each other, they are united as One.

b. And the Jews knew that this is exactly what He was saying, for look at their response to Jesus' words here in vs. 31-33.

IV. John 10:31-33;

A. Upon hearing Jesus' claim to be one with the Father, the Jews immediately picked up stones to kill Jesus with. They are so filled with rage and hatred towards Jesus that they don't even consider a legal investigation or trial, they are wanting to take matters into their own hands.

B. But Jesus stops them and basically asks them what He did that warranted their response; which of the Father's works warranted Him be stoned to death.

C. They responded that it wasn't for the works He did, but for the words He said, because He made Himself out to be God. And to them that was paramount to blasphemy.

1. Blasphemy is speaking evil against God; saying things that are contrary to or in opposition to the glory and nature of God.

2. For someone to claim that they were God, or that they were One with God would be an offense to God. To think that fallen human flesh could be compared to the perfection of Almighty God demeans God and robs God of the glory that is due Him alone.

3. So, if a fallen man were to claim to be God or to be divine in nature, to be on the same level as God would indeed be blasphemy. But Jesus is not a fallen man. He is perfect, He is divine, He is one with the Father, so it isn't blasphemy if it is true.

D. It is interesting to me that the religious leaders described Jesus' works as "good works". They said, "For a good work we do not stone You". they knew the works Jesus did, the signs and miracles were good.

1. They did not deny that He had the power to do the miraculous. When Jesus healed people on the Sabbath they got upset with Jesus, but they didn't deny the work itself; they couldn't.

2. Nicodemus, a Pharisee himself, came to Jesus under the cover of night and specifically stated, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with Him." (**Jn. 3:2**)

3. But saying His works were good, or that He was a good teacher was not enough. People can admire Jesus as a good teacher, a miracle worker, or simply a good moral example, but eventually **every person must answer His claim to deity**.

4. Jesus doesn't let us just admire Him as a good teacher or miracle worker, or good example. We must come to a decision upon who He is and His claim to deity.

5. Jesus claimed to be God. The Bible is very clear that Jesus Christ is God.

a. Thomas declared Jesus was God when he said of Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (**Jn. 20:28**)

b. Paul declared Jesus was God when he wrote to Titus of the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, (**Tit. 2:13**)

c. In the book of Romans Paul speaks of Christ and how He is overall and is the eternally blessed God. (**Rom. 9:5**)

d. Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,…" (**Isa. 9:6a**)

e. The author of Hebrews writes of Jesus being God when He speaks of the Scriptures speaking about the Son saying, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;" (**Heb. 1:8a**)

6. The Bible makes it very clear. Jesus is God. And all must come to a decision on whether or not they are going to believe that Jesus is God; whether or not you are going to agree with His testimony and what the Bible clearly claimed Him to be.

E. Well, let's take a look at what Jesus had to say in response to their claim of Him being guilty of blasphemy. Read with me vs. 34-39.

V. John 10:34-39;

A. Jesus does something quite clever here in response to their persecution and accusations. He turns to the Word of God.

1. Jesus quotes from Psalm 82. In Psalm 82, Asaph, the person who wrote the Psalm, is describing God meeting with others who are acting as some sort of judges upon the earth.
2. It is the word "Elohim" in the Hebrew. And the word "Elohim" can be used to speak of God, but it is also used to speak of other spiritual beings and even human judges.
3. In Psalm 82 vs. 6 we read, "I said, 'You are gods (Elohim), and all of you are children of the Most High." (**Ps. 82:6**)
4. So, we see that the Scriptures, in the book of Psalms, speaks of men being gods, and being children of the Most High.
5. So then, Jesus basically asks, if it was ok for the psalmist to describe beings other than God Himself as gods and to also describe them as children of the Most High, why is it blasphemy for Me, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world.
6. Jesus is arguing from the lesser to the greater. If it was ok for Asaph to say such things and it was considered part of the Scriptures given to us, why is it not ok for Me to say the same thing seeing as how I am greater than Asaph. I have been sent by the Father Himself, sanctified by the Father, so why is it blasphemy for Me to say "I am the Son of God"?
7. Do you follow the logic Jesus uses here? If it was alright for Asaph, a fallen man to say this, why isn't alright for Me to say it?
8. Jesus once again has turned the tables upon them. They thought they had Him, but He easily escapes their accusation by using God's Word to justify His claim.

B. But instead of rubbing their noses in it, we see the true heart of Jesus here in vs. 37 & 38. Jesus pleads with them to believe. He gives them yet another opportunity to respond to Him.
   1. He pleads with them to look at His works. To let the evidence speak for itself. He says, "If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; *but* if I do, though you do not believe Me [and My words], believe the works." "*At least let the works speak for themselves. Let them lead you to the only possible conclusion. You'll see*", is the idea.
   2. So that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.
   3. Jesus still is trying to get them to believe. To follow the evidence and let it lead them to knowing and believing that the Father is in Jesus and Jesus is in the Father.
   4. His heart, even after all of their attempts to arrest Him and kill Him, is to still see them turn from their sinful ways and come to faith in Him.
   5. This highlights for us **the long-suffering of the Lord**. His grace and compassion on full display. Even when they want nothing to do with Him and are continually trying to resist Him, He still loves them and desires them to turn from their sins and gives them yet another opportunity to do so.

C. And how do they respond to the grace, compassion, and long-suffering of the Lord? Vs. 39 says that they sought again to seize Him; to arrest Him.
   1. Despite the love and compassion He displayed, the Jews refused to let the evidence lead them anywhere. They were set in their ways and nothing was going to change their minds.
   2. And even though they had fully surrounded Him, Jesus once again escaped out of their hand. His time had not yet come.

D. Take a look at the final verses of our text and we'll wrap things up and transition to our time of communion. Read with me vs. 40-42.

VI. John 10:40-42;

A. Jesus departed from the presence of the religious leaders and made His way across the Jordan to the place where John the Baptist had been baptizing.
   1. This is sort of a full circle moment here. Jesus is back to where His earthly ministry first started and this marks the end of John's record of Jesus public ministry to the religious leaders and many of the general public.
   2. From here on out, Jesus seems to turn more inwards to His disciples and those who were following Him. The outreach program has ended, and it was time to prepare His disciples for what was next.
   3. From this time, we are about three and half months from Jesus returning to Jerusalem for Passover where He will willingly lay down His life upon the cross as our Passover Lamb.
   4. He focuses these final months upon ministering to those who actually believe and are following Him; ministering to and tending to His sheep.

B. As Jesus was out in the wilderness, many came out to him who remembered the testimony of John the Baptist. And as they recalled all the things John said about Jesus they concluded that all he said was true and many believed in Jesus in that place.
   1. These people who came to faith in Jesus stand in stark contrast to the religious leaders who denied Him.
      a. The religious leaders saw many miracles, they spoke to Jesus, face to face on several different occasions, but they hardened their hearts and would not believe and instead of repenting and believing Jesus, they tried to arrest Him and kill Him.
      b. These disciples of John the Baptist who came to Jesus beyond the Jordan didn't see any miracles, they only had the testimony of John the Baptist, they had far less interactions with Jesus, less opportunities to respond, yet they opened their hearts, they followed the evidence they had, and placed their hope and faith in Jesus.
   2. The issue was not a matter of not having enough evidence, but responding to the evidence God gave them. The people who came to Jesus beyond the Jordan didn't have much evidence, but they

responded to it. The religious leaders had tons and tons of evidence, but would not respond to it. **The issue here is how we respond to the evidence God has given us**.

a. People who have been given evidence, but demand more, they're like the Pharisees and more than likely no amount of evidence will ever do.

b. But if you will simply follow the evidence God has given you, and allow it to lead you to Him, He will welcome you in as one of His own. If you will hear His voice and respond to His call, you will be welcomed into His flock and become one of His sheep.

3. If you are here this morning and you are not a believer, my question to you would be, what's the hold up? What is it that keeps you from hearing His voice, knowing Him and following after Him? Eternal life and eternal security hangs in the balance.

4. For those of you who are believers, I would still ask the same question of you when it comes to your walk with the Lord. What's the hold-up when it comes to knowing Christ more deeply, what's the hold-up when it comes to fully following after Him and His leading and guiding. Listen to His call, and follow after Him fully.

C. At this time, we're going to transition to our time of communion. The worship team is going to come back up and the ushers are going to prepare to distribute the elements.

1. Communion is an opportunity for us to meet with our Savior. To look back and remember what He has done for us, but also a time to simply let God search our own hearts.

2. When Paul gave His instructions to the church in Corinth he wrote how we are to first examine ourselves before we partake of the bread and the cup. To allow God the opportunity to reveal in us areas He wants to work upon in our walk with Him.

3. My hope and prayer is that we would hear His voice during our time of communion and respond to Him, as He leads and guides.

4. If you are here this morning and you are not a believer, my prayer would be that you submit yourself to Him, and respond to His call. But if not, I would instruct you not to partake of the communion elements. As the ushers pass them out, just kindly gesture to them letting them know that you won't be partaking of the elements. I don't want anyone partaking of the elements in an unworthy manner.

5. Communion is something for His sheep to do. It is one way we identify with the Lord.

a. As we partake of the bread and cup we do so remembering His broken body that was placed upon the cross of Calvary for us.

b. We remember His shed blood that was poured out for us.

6. We remember what Christ did and partake of the elements in faith and in acceptance of His work upon the cross and the victory He obtained for us.

7. The worship team is going to lead us in a time of worship. Feel free to join with them as the Lord leads. I'm not going to come back up, I'd like for you to partake as the Lord leads.

8. If you haven't partaken by the time the worship team ends their song, they will instruct you to partake at that time and then lead us in our final song before we go.

9. I pray the Lord blesses you and ministers to you as you spend time with Him. Let's spend some time with our Good Shepherd.