**💥 CELEBRATION! 💥**

**OPENING**: Doxology: “Praise God from Whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below, praise Him above ye heavenly host…praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!”

**INTRO**.:

**A.** There are a lot of celebrations in the Bible. There are more feasts than fasts given for Israel. There are specific celebrations even for the Church in the N.T. Think: salvation decisions, believer’s baptism, church fellowships, church services (some apparently don’t think they qualify, so they stay home!), but it should be a time of celebration and joy!

**B.** I, as pastor of 4 churches never celebrated a mortgage burning, but surely this will, or should rank, as a great time of celebration. And if I know anything about First Baptist, I am sure it will be. Here, you use any excuse to eat!!! (And I have been looking forward to Bob’s prime rib!!)

**C.** Today I want to direct your attention to a couple of great biblical celebrations, along with this one of your own…

**I. CELEBRATION #1: COMPLETION OF THE TABERNACLE: (Exodus 40)**

**A.** Conceived On the Third Month: (of Israel’s calendar with Moses on Mt. Sinai)

**NOTE**: But Moses was on the mountain just after the third new moon in the third month of the first year that Israel went out of Egypt.

1. It took exactly nine months later for its completion.
2. The Apostle John tells us that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost and “tabernacled” among us on earth, or was born, 9 months later.
3. Interestingly the Tabernacle was completed (or birthed) 9 months later the first month of the new year. 40:1,2

**B.** The Lord Then Moved into the Tent:

1. His presence was in the form of a cloud (v.34).
2. Moses himself was not allowed to enter the Tabernacle! v.35
3. But now Israel was able to be on the move now. vv. 36-38

**ILLUS**.: Talk about a celebration! Israel had been stalled in the desert, but now whenever the cloud moved (the Lord), they were able to move! That cloud not only hovered over the Tabernacle and protected them in the daytime from the heat, but at night it became a fire and gave them warmth.

**II. CELEBRATION #2: COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE: (2 Chron. 5:11-14)**

**A.** Conceived By the Lord when David Was King:

1. David was not permitted to build the Temple because he was a man of war.
2. Solomon, his illicit son with Bathsheba, was given that honor.
3. It was 418 years after Israel was delivered miraculously from Egypt that the foundation for the Temple was laid. I Kings 6:1

**B.** The Lord Moved into the Temple 7 Years Later:

1. Again, the building was filled with a cloud of God’s glory. (cf.: I Ki. 8:10,11)
2. This time the cloud was accompanied by fire! (2 Chron. 7:1-3)
3. They celebrated for 7 days with instruments, singing, and feasting. (v.8)

**NOTE**: The tragedy of all this was that Israel again returned to worshipping Baal and sacrificing their children to him (Satan)! And committing fornication with the Baalite Temple prostitutes, both men and women. These twin sins ultimately brought about God’s judgment on the nation and the Temple was destroyed twice under Nebuchadnezzar!!

We are now committing the same sins in America!!! Can God’s judgment be far off?

But let’s dwell on the celebrations, instead of Israel’s (and our) sins!

**III. CELEBRATION #3: THE CHURCH ESTABLISHED ON PENTECOST: (Acts 2)**

**A.** What a Great Beginning! (3000 saved and baptized and added to the Church).

 **1.** The Lord uses three images for His Church:

1. What a way to celebrate! We are a part of His Body. (Eph. 1 :22,23 & 4:11,12 & 5:30)
2. Then we are a part of His Building. (1 Cor. 3:9)
3. The most precious symbol He uses is that of His Bride. (How personal!) (Rev. 21:9)

**ILLUS**.: Three years ago, my bride, Shirley, left me for another Man… Jesus! I miss her every day and can’t wait to see her again, but the Lord is now her Bridegroom and Husband!

1. Presently the ceremony is still future.
2. The marriage will take place in Heaven
3. The reception will also take place there: The Marriage Supper of the Lamb

**CONCL**.:

🔸Talk about a CELEBRATION! What a time of rejoicing that will be…when we finally meet our Bridegroom face-to-face and begin our eternal honeymoon!!!

🔸The good news is we don’t have to wait to begin celebrating!!! And today is just the beginning of our never-ending celebration. I believe Heaven is celebrating this joyous day with the First Baptist Church of Easton.

🔸And YOU should be celebrating with the man who brought you to this day. Pastor Arthur Gilmore (and his steadfast wife)!!!