

The following excerpt is from Ron Bartanen's "The Sower".

141 BAPTIZED! This week I viewed a news article reporting the recent baptism of 141 people at one church service at the "Upstate Church" in S. Carolina. Their minister expressed his amazement, saying, "We have never seen anything like this in our church.... More than any other moment in my ministry, I felt we were living in the book of Acts. We had preached from Acts 2, and it seemed as if we were in the pages ourselves." Comment was made that such surprising reactions to preaching would possibly be an indication of a spiritual awakening in our country. This caught my attention. We should be praying for such an awakening that will look to the undenominational Christ-centered churches in the Scriptures, beginning, in fact, with Acts 2. I noticed that the congregation mentioned was not tagged with a denominational name. As denominations are drifting farther and farther from the guidance of Scripture, some pull out, often becoming independent of denominational and sectarian connections, and freer from divisive creeds and proclamations of church councils. Any spiritual movement in the direction of finding joy in submission to biblical authority should warm our hearts.

I recently read a similar account of a large number being baptized. We should rejoice to see such a response from those who are taking the word of God as their guide. And we should engage in prayer. We live in troublesome times—times such as were evident in the days of the New Testament. It will take prayer along with the word of God to open hearts to Christ and His word. As Jesus prayed the evening before His crucifixion, we need to likewise pray for believers: "That they all may be one....that they also may be one in us, that the world might believe that Thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). He did not pray for hundreds of denominations, but a single body of people committed to Christ. It began in Acts 2. There's not a better chapter to induce us to pray and labor for a true movement of God in these troublesome times.

—Ron

Reading this message from Ron B. reminded me of the following song. It was written by R.E. Winsett in 1942 when the entire world was at war. "Troublesome times" were indeed present then, and as Ron mentions, we are living in "troublesome times" today as well. It is very encouraging to read about this great response happening in parts of our country as a result of hearing the Good News of God's Word being preached!

Jesus is Coming Soon

Troublesome times are here, filling men's hearts with fear
Freedom we all hold dear now is at stake
Humbling your hearts to God saves from the chastening rod
Seek the way pilgrims trod, Christians awake

CHORUS:

Jesus is coming soon, morning or night or noon
Many will meet their doom, trumpets will sound
All of the dead shall rise, righteous meet in the skies
Going where no one dies, heavenward bound

Troubles will soon be o'er, happy forevermore
When we meet on that shore, free from all care
Rising up in the sky, telling this world goodbye
Homeward we then shall fly, glory to share

REPEAT CHORUS 2X