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The Coop Report...

Are You Ready for the Last Roundup?

Topical Verse: *"Now at that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued. 2 Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever."*

Daniel 12:1-3

Are you ready for the *last* roundup? I'm not talking about cattle drives, I'm talking about salvation… eternity….the little book of life of the Lamb who has been slain and whether or not *your* name and the name of our loved ones are in this book.

As our church's Senior Pastor, reminds us, statistically, 90% of Americans believe they will go to heaven when they die. However, on Sunday mornings, at the time when church goers should be heading toward church, the roads are surprisingly empty. Even when you count the numbers of those who actually attend worship services, not all of them understand the qualification for entering the pearly gates of heaven rather than the place of eternal torment called hell.

When reflecting on our pastor's message, I had a revelation that it *must* be the lack of *scriptural knowledge* that drives the news media and our populace to bombard our president and his cabinet with harsh criticism about the war in Iraq, the increase of terrorism, and its threat to our nation. Critics of President Bush complain that he has stirred up a "hornets nest" with the Muslim fundamentalists by our conquest of the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein, implying that if we had not done this, we would not be threatened by these misguided servants of Satan who are willing to blow themselves up to kill Americans and those who support America's efforts to establish a democracy in the Middle East.

Those who criticize President Bush and his policy are simply reacting out of fear…fear of losing all that they hold dear…fear from losing the perishables they *see*, not the promises of God they cannot…except through the study of the Holy Bible.

For Christians who are scripturally well founded, the signs of the last days of our present earth and all of God's creation are at hand. Simply put, God's plan for His creation continues to evolve by way of His game plan towards the rapture of His Church and the final harvesting of the remaining souls of humankind that will remain to endure the Great Tribulation. After which, Christ will establish a millennium of peace on the earth; release the dragon (Satan) from his bondage in the abyss; destroy the dragon and His armies and create a new Heaven and a new earth where His faithful saints will live in eternal peace and relationship with every living thing as we worship Him in His very presence.

Consequently, the tragedy of September 11, 2001, the current violence in the Mid East, the terrorism, the seemingly impending showdowns with Iran, Syria, and North Korea are part of God's plan, not the fault of President Bush or anyone in his administration...President Bush and his actions are the result of the fulfillment of scripture.

The following passages from the New Testament provide evidence of the signs that immediately precede these end times.

"3 You must understand this, that in the last days distressing times will come. 2 For people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, brutes, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, 5 holding to the outward form of godliness but denying its power..."

2 Timothy 3:1-5

4 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I solemnly urge you: 2 proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching. 3 For the time is coming when people will not put up with sound doctrine, but hav-

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ing itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own desires, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths. 5 As for you, always be sober, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, carry out your ministry fully."

2 Timothy 4:1-5

Sound familiar? Acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle; gay marriage and unions; surges in the "worship" of the material things of this world; children who have a complete disregard for the authority of their parents; children killing their parents; parents killing their children; churchgoers surrounding themselves with teachers and pastors that tell them what they want to hear instead of the true Word of God.

As citizens of the wealthiest nation in the world, we owe everything we have been given to God…our wealth, our freedom, our strength, but I believe we have failed to give God, our sole benefactor, all the credit. As the Book of Revelation recounts the harshness of the end times, I believe the "whore" referenced in the following passage is none other than America. America, the last and final experiment of God…a nation founded on Christian precepts…a nation whose wealth and power that rise above all others on the earth…a nation that will be torn down by God's enemies:

15 And he said to me, "The waters that you saw, where the whore is seated, are peoples and multitudes and nations and languages. 16 And the ten horns that you saw, they and the beast will hate the whore; they will make her desolate and naked; they will devour her flesh and burn her up with fire. 17 For God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by agreeing to give their kingdom to the beast, until the words of God will be fulfilled. 18 The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

Revelation 17:15-18

"Torn down by God's enemies" you say? How is it that God's power is insufficient to repel an assault on God's people? Well, it isn't. It's just that God has, in His infinite wisdom, used His enemies to deal with His people when they have disobeyed Him…

3 Now these are the nations that the Lord left to test all those in Israel who had no experience of any war in Canaan 2 (it was only that successive generations of Israelites might know war, to teach those who had no experience of it before): 3 the five lords of the Philistines, and all the Canaanites, and the Sidonians, and the Hivites who lived on Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal-hermon as far as Lebo-hamath. 4 They were for the testing of Israel, to know whether Israel would obey the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their ancestors by Moses."

Judges 3: 3-4

God has used His enemies to discipline His people since He brought them out of bondage from Egypt, declaring them to be His own (the nation of Israel) and He will continue to use His enemies (as he is now) to fulfill His glorious plan of the redemption of mankind followed by the eternal relationship He seeks with us in the new Heaven and the new earth.

So, you'd better get ready for the last roundup, if want to be alive in Christ for all eternity. Now is also the time to bring your loved ones and friends into this right relationship with the Most High.

Our national security and our national efforts by President Bush to remove the brutal Saddam Hussein regime from its power over all the peoples of Iraq and help establish a democracy in the Middle East, though costly, were (and remain) the "right" thing to do.

If your heart and spirit are focused on the material things of this world, your short, temporal life here will be immersed in protecting them and in fear of the future. On the other hand, if your heart and spirit are Christ-centered…focused on the unchanging promises of God…you will never fear what the future might bring, because it is an eternal one void of the mortal worries of this present earth.

As a nation, we just have to rely on our faith in God to bring us through these perilous times, knowing full well that God promises His people, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).