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Jesus, Mahdi both coming, says Iran's Ahmadinejad In New Year's greeting to Christians worldwide asks what Christ would do if he were here today

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In a greeting to the world's Christians for the coming new year, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said he expects both Jesus and the Shiite messianic figure, Imam Mahdi, to return and "wipe away oppression."

"I wish all the Christians a very happy new year and I wish to ask them a question as well," said Ahmadinejad, according to an Iranian Student News Agency report cited by YnetNews.com

"My one question from the Christians is: What would Jesus do if he were present in the world today? What would he do before some of the oppressive powers of the world who are in fact residing in Christian countries? Which powers would he revive and which of them would he destroy?" asked the Iranian leader.

"If Jesus were present today, who would be facing him and who would be following him?"

(Story continues below)



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad appearing at "The World Without Zionism" conference Oct. 26, 2005

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Ahmadinejad then made a connection between Jesus and the Imam Mahdi, believed by Shiites to have disappeared as a child in A.D. 941. When the Mahdi returns, they contend, he will reign on earth for seven years before bringing about a final judgment and the end of the world.

"All I want to say is that the age of hardship, threat and spite will come to an end someday and, God willing, Jesus would return to the world along with the emergence of the descendant of the Islam's holy prophet, Imam Mahdi, and wipe away every tinge of oppression, pain and agony from the face of the world," Ahmadinejad said.

Ahmadinejad has been urging Iranians to prepare for the coming of the Mahdi by turning the country into a powerful and advanced Islamic society and by avoiding the corruption and excesses of the West.

He sees his main mission, as he recounted in a Nov. 16, 2005, speech in Tehran, as to "pave the path for the glorious reappearance of Imam Mahdi, may Allah hasten his reappearance."

With Iran's continued development of nuclear technology in defiance of the West, some analysts fear Ahmadinejad's intent is to trigger the kind of global conflagration he envisions will set the stage for the end of the world.

Ahmadinejad hosted a conference last week examining whether the Nazi genocide took place, drawing Holocaust deniers from around the world. The Iranian president has described the Holocaust as a "myth" and called for Israel to be wiped off the map.

"The Zionist regime will be wiped out soon the same way the Soviet Union was, and humanity will achieve freedom." he said.

Last month, he said he believes the world is rapidly becoming "Ahmadinejadized," with global leaders following in his footsteps.

"I have traveled to all the continents except for one, and I know what is going on out there. Everybody is eager to hear the Iranian people's message," the Aftab-Yazd newspaper quoted the president as saying, according to Agence France-Presse. "The world is rapidly becoming Ahmadinejadized."

The hardliner said Iran's "two big missions are constructing the country and introducing a model for humanity."

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