**Opening Session**

**World Jewish Adventist Congress**

**By Ted Wilson, PhD**

Brothers and sisters, I’m thrilled to greet you today as the children of Abraham and the redeemed of God through Jesus of Nazareth.

You’ve come from far and near, from many parts of the world, but you’ve come in the precious name of Jesus Christ, whose Messianic mission was inaugurated on this earth, the Kingdom of grace, some two thousand years ago.

With that inauguration, the Messiah gave Himself as a ransom for the sins of the world and thus made it possible for forgiveness and redemption for all of us, both Jews and Gentiles, and sealed all of us as members of God’s family of the New Covenant, promised long ago through Jeremiah 31:31, and fulfilled by and in the person of the Messiah as exemplified in Luke 22:20.

What a wonderful privilege it is for the children of Abraham to come together in this conference, affirming Jesus the Messiah, His gospel of redemption, His righteousness by faith, His grace that ensures all of us in redemption from sin and a new relationship with our God.

And He promises that soon He will return to take us home, to the very heart of our great God and Creator. You see, your assembly in worship and prayer, in study and fellowship for the next few days, is a witness to a new day that God has made possible to dawn over us, a new day in which the children of Abraham have joined hands in fellowship with Seventh-day Adventists. This World Jewish Adventist Congress meets as a symbol that the universal kingdom of the covenant of God’s grace will soon bring the eternal Kingdom of glory, as Hebrews 11:10 tells us, whose builder and maker is God.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, as a believer in the soon coming of Jesus our Lord, and on behalf of the world Adventist church, I rejoice with you that you can meet together in this world congress, as Jewish believers in Jesus. May your study, fellowship, and worship there in Paris strengthen your faith in Jesus the Messiah, and may His grace sustain you through the days to come.

I’m thrilled to note that the organizers of this conference have chosen the theme, “Let Us Worship Him,” a phrase taken from the first of the Three Angels’ Messages in Revelation 14. You see, from Genesis to Revelation, worship constitutes a major milepost, from the beginning of the great controversy between Christ and Satan in heaven; the fall of Adam and Eve; the dispute between Cain and Abel on how to approach God; the building of the sanctuary in the desert; Isaiah’s vision of what constitutes true worship; the attempt of Satan to trap the Messiah in the wilderness between worship of the true God and the allurements of this world; and the universal triumph and celebration on the sea of glass—in all of this, the Bible is concerned with worship, in condemning the false and in upholding the true.

You see, worship antedates the creation of humanity. As such, worship exists not for the stimulation or fulfilment that it may bring us, but because of God’s character and worthiness.

Consider Isaiah’s vision found in Isaiah 6:3: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.” Or consider the Psalmist’s great acclaim, found in Psalm 48:1: “Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised.” Or Habakkuk 2:20: “The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence.” Or the proclamation of the angel of Revelation: “Fear God, and give glory to him; . . . worship him who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of water.” A marvelous text, Revelation 14:7.

You see, the clear message is to acknowledge that God is God, and as Psalm 29:2 says, “Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”

You see, this message becomes particularly demanding at such a time as the present, when the concept of the holiness of God has all but disappeared from our midst, to remind us that worship, as demanded by the word of God, is not open for negotiation. The first commandment tells us, in Exodus 20:3, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (NKJV). And then, to complement this comes God’s closing message to earth, through the three angels of Revelation 14:6, 7, “Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, ‘Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven, and the earth, the sea and springs of water.’ ”

Thus the call and the theme, Let Us Worship Him, is the call that the Jewish Seventh-day Adventist should take very seriously. That call is rooted in the creation account of Genesis, the first book of the Torah, and spans over biblical history and thunders in God’s final message to this world, the first angel’s message of Revelation 14:6–12 and the second and third angels of that message.

True worship takes place at that moment when self is stripped of all its pride, its pretensions and deviations, and moves toward the recognition of its Maker and Redeemer.

Both Genesis and Revelation join to tell the redemptive demand that all the creation of God must bow in worship of the Creator and the Messiah. The oldest hymn of praise and worship found in the Hebrew Bible, composed and sung after the redemptive experience of the Red Sea crossing, pictures this emptying of self and recognition of the God who acts in human history for the redemption of His people.

Out of such experience true worship is born, and acceptance of God not as some impersonal force but as my Lord, my Strength, and my song, even as He remains the Sovereign of the universe, glorious in power and majestic in holiness, to reign forever and ever.

Let your congress theme, Let Us Worship Him, allow for a springing up of excitement everywhere, as we look at the biblical narrative, not only in the instances we have already mentioned but in the launching of the New Testament church at Pentecost, where we see powerful examples.

Acts 2:41–47 records this outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of three thousand, the acceptance of the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship in the breaking of bread, and in prayers and worshiping daily in the temple.

Note the nature of worship and fellowship in the first church established after the Pentecost. The members founded a community of faith, made up of Jews and people from other nations. They received the baptism from the hands of the apostles, they continued in the apostles’ doctrine and teachings, they broke bread and were united together. The church grew daily.

The very first church was made up of the children of Abraham and Gentiles—both groups embracing the gospel of Jesus, the Messiah who was crucified, rose again, and ascended into heaven just a short while ago. This indeed was the model church.

Ellen White in *The Acts of the Apostles*, page 91, speaks of this church where Jews and Gentiles embrace the fulfillment of God’s promise made to Adam, Abraham, Moses, and through all the prophets. And we read from the Spirit of Prophecy, “The organization of the church at Jerusalem was to serve as a model for the organization of churches in every other place where messengers of truth should win converts to the gospel. Those to whom was given the responsibility of the general oversight of the church were not to load it over God’s heritage, but as wise shepherds were to ‘feed the flock of God, . . . being examples to the flock [1 Peter 5:2, 2]; and the deacons were to be ‘men of honest reports, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom.’ These men were to take their positions unitedly on the side of right and to maintain it with firmness and decision. Thus they would have a uniting influence upon the entire flock.”

What Ellen White is speaking of in this passage is the Pentecostal dimension of the growth of the early church, when both Jews and Gentiles came together to proclaim the gospel of the Messiah.

That early fulfillment was not for that time alone; it is for our time too. And that’s why you are attending this special world congress. Says the servant of the Lord in *The Acts of Apostles*, pages 380 and 381, “When this gospel shall be presented in its fullness to the Jews, many will accept Christ as the Messiah. . . .

“In the closing proclamation of the gospel, when special work is to be done for classes of people hitherto neglected, God expects His messengers to take particular interest in the Jewish people whom they find in all parts of the earth. As the Old Testament Scriptures are blended with the New in an explanation of Jehovah’s eternal purpose, this will be to many of the Jews as the dawn of a new creation, the resurrection of the soul. Many will by faith receive Christ as their Redeemer.”

You see, Ellen White, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, had great hopes for Jewish brothers and sisters who would embrace Jesus as their Messiah and become part of the clarion, the clear, the strong call of the remnant church proclaiming the Three Angels’ Messages of Revelation 14.

She saw the great truths of the Bible, Creation, the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath, the seventh-day Sabbath, human nature and destiny, the great prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, the mystery of the cross and its redemptive power, and above all, Jesus as the redeemer of all people—proclaimed by Adventists, including Jewish Adventists, with a loud voice throughout this entire world.

You see, the congress that you are attending in Paris is a small step in preparation for that impending global clarion call. You’re part of it. What an exciting and exhilarating feeling, to know that heaven is on your side and will soon call you to proclaim with great power.

Ellen White had a far-reaching vision of Jewish believers not only joining hands with the remnant church as witnesses to the gospel, but also stewards of God’s proclamation.

Again, from that wonderful book entitled *The Acts of Apostles*, page 381, we read the following: “Among the Jews are some who, like Saul of Tarsus, are mighty in the Scriptures, and these will proclaim with wonderful power the immutability of the law of God. The God of Israel will bring this to pass in our day. His arm is not shortened that it cannot save. As His servants labor in faith for those who have long been neglected and despised, His salvation will be revealed.”

What a marvelous quotation. So just imagine, within your midst right there, that there is a Saul of Tarsus waiting for the Holy Spirit to empower him or her as the last-day apostle Paul so beautifully did. Many of you can be endowed with God’s precious blessings in proclamation.

Imagine within your midst there are probably many Peters and Apolloses, Johns, Priscillas, and Aquilas to unleash the power of the gospel and to proclaim Jesus Christ the Redeemer under the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the latter rain.

Such is the promise given and fulfillment anticipated when the children of Abraham embrace Jesus the Messiah, and together give the universal call to worship the creator of heavens and the earth.

Our Jewish brothers and sisters who have taken hold of the Adventist message and hope, and you are a special representation of that great fellowship, will be a great blessing in the final proclamation of the coming King.

Together we shall all, Jew and Gentile, Russian and American, Spanish and English, Japanese and Indian, Chinese and African, be one proclaiming with one voice, “Behold the King cometh, let us come and worship Him, the creator and redeemer of all of us.”

May God bless you in a very special way. I have great hopes for the outcome of your congress. The Lord wants to see you reach many people throughout this world, and all of us need to have a special, wonderful focus on helping Jewish people to understand Jesus’ great love for them. And God will use you in a magnificent way as you point people to the soon coming of our Lord and Savior, our Creator and our Redeemer.

May God bless you in this congress, is my prayer. Maranatha!