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Studying at the source:

Seho Chang, a South Korean Presbyterian minister, was congratulated on gaining an MA degree in “The Bible and Its World” from Hebrew University. What makes this achievement even more praiseworthy is that Chang, 36, was seriously wounded in the terrorist bombing in the cafeteria of the Mt. Scopus campus in 2002. Suffering internal wounds and burns, he was unconscious for a month and needed long-term treatment. Chang hopes to complete his Ph.D. studies in Jerusalem before returning to South Korea to teach in a religious seminary.

Fighting false “safety”: The Israel Cancer Association is trying to prevent the importation of a tobacco-less, smoke-less cigarette. Although avoiding exposure to toxin-filled smoke, the plastic “cigarette” releases the highly addictive nicotine into the smoker’s body.

More scroll fragments

found: Professor Chanan Eshel, an archaeologist from Bar-Ilan University, is excited about the discovery of two fragments of two-thousand-year-old parchment scrolls from the Dead Sea area. “No more scrolls had been found in the Judean desert since 1965,” he said. The pieces of brown animal skin were inscribed with verses from Leviticus, and were most likely found where Jews hid from the Romans during the Bar

Kochba revolt of 135 c.e. Mindful of attempts to forge antiquities, the pieces of scroll are being tested by the Israel Antiquities Authority to determine their authenticity. The fragments encourage scholars to continue searching in the hope that there are still more discoveries to be made.

United Nations appointments: For the first time in almost forty years, the UN has appointed an Israeli to the General Assembly. Ambassador Dan Gillerman was appointed to the post in June as one of twenty-one new vice-presidents. In July 2005, it was announced that Meir Itzhaki, the Foreign Ministry’s deputy director for arms control, was to take up the post of deputy chair of the UN Disarmament Commission.

The Jewish Olympics: Spectacular fireworks and an entrance parade of 7,000 athletes—5,000 of them from outside Israel and others from fifty-two countries on five continents—marked the 17th Maccabiah Games in July 2005. Events included basketball and chess. In his opening address to the 40,000 spectators, among whom was Mark Spitz, winner of seven Olympic gold medals for swimming, President Moshe Katsav stated that the Maccabiah symbolized the unity and family identity of the Jewish people. The four Australian athletes who died

in the collapse of a bridge at the opening of the 15th Maccabiah Games were remembered as survivors and their families entered Tel Aviv’s Ramat Gan National Stadium.

Silver anniversary: May 2005 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. The event was celebrated with a special award ceremony at the Knesset where Malcolm Hedding, ICE’s executive-director, was congratulated by Yuri Shtern, National Union MK and chair of the Knesset’s Christian Allies Caucus. The ceremony highlighted the increasing cooperation between Israel and Christian supporters. Noted for bringing thousands of Christian pilgrims to Israel for the Feast of Tabernacles and its week-long activity-filled program, ICE also provides support for social projects in cooperation with Israel’s social services and welfare organizations.

Returning to the roots: In recognition of the fact that the major part of Jesus’ ministry took place in Galilee, Tourism Minister Avraham Herschson announced that the government plans to build a major Christian visitor center in Upper Galilee. The center is expected to increase the number of pilgrims to the Holy Land.