Briggs, Richard S. <i>Th</i>	eological Hermeneutics and	d the Book of Numbers as	
04 I D o o o			

ascriptive, yet affirms "that much of what is related in the book of Numbers probably does correspond to some degree or other with events that did happen in the wilderness" (59). In chapter four, Briggs begins with what he calls his "theological reading of the text," showing by contrast how Karl Barth's understanding of sloth in Numbers 13–14 imposes Barth's own dogmatic goals onto the text rather than reading the text as Scripture. In chapter five, Briggs first shows how the legislative material of Numbers 15 has been understood by other commentators, concluding that his theological interpretation only needs to look at "the overarching narrative" (129). He then plunges into the difficult story of Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16, making his point that a purely descriptive approach is difficult for modern ears to accept and noting how the New Testament book of Hebrews views these narratives.

The only chapter which actually emphasizes a Christian (that is, Christocentric) reading of Numbers is chapter six, "The Rock Was Christ." Briefly surveying the text of Numbers 20:1–13, Briggs moves quickly to his theological approach, which "seeks to relate the daims of the text in some manner to the daims of (or for or about) Christ" (168). Thus, he cites "1 Corinthians 10 as an exemplar of a critical theological hermeneutic in practice" (169). A Christian reading of a text will "find Christ," to use Luther's noteworthy phrase. As Briggs notes, "Paul reads Numbers literally. As long as it is understood that 'literal sense' is not here in this traditional way. In this ascriptive sense the rock is 'literally' Christ..." (183).

Returning to the commentary-style approach, Briggs' second-to-last chapter looks at Numbers 25, the account of a plague among the Israelites because of sexual encounters with Moabite women. The priest, Phineas, reacts with zealous aggression, killing the couple in their tent and stopping the plague. After looking at the textual material, Briggs reviews recent studies which

apply the text to contemporary situations—as homiletical material for our Christian journey.	