



And I Turned to See the Voice (Studies in Theological Interpretation): The Rhetoric of Vision in the New Testament

Edith M. Humphrey

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Although they do not constitute a dominant genre, vision-reports--such as those surrounding the nativity, the transfiguration and resurrection, Stephen's martyrdom, and Jesus's appearance to Saul--appear at crucial moments in numerous New Testament texts. Surprisingly, however, they have occasioned few detailed studies. Edith Humphrey's careful work neatly fills that gap in the scholarly literature. By means of a literary and rhetorical approach, Humphrey offers new insights into the use of vision-reports, moving beyond previous studies that have tended to focus only on the recorded event (what actually happened?) to the deeper polemic, literary, and theological dimensions (how and to what end do the authors embed the vision-report in their writings?). Humphrey details four uses of vision-reports: to complete the narrative, to direct the argument, to shape the narrative, and to fire the imagination. Taking the cue from these narratives, which are at once "open" and "directive," she commends a hermeneutics of receptivity to the reader. "The argumentative and aesthetic contribution of vision-reports to persuasion in biblical texts is an exciting area of investigation, one in which Edith Humphrey has already distinguished herself. Her literary skill is evident in the ways in which she, as a sensitive reader of texts, invites us to be more attentive and engaged readers ourselves as well as in the ways her own winsome style encourages us to read both the texts and her observations on them with a 'hermeneutics of welcome' rather than the customary 'hermeneutics of suspicion.'"

--David A. deSilva, Trustees' Professor of New Testament and Greek, Ashland Theological Seminary "Humphrey surprises us with her ability to lift the veil from the mysterious vision-reports of the New Testament. She clarifies how the words and images of vision-reports work together to create the rhetoric of sacred texts. Humphrey has brought the vision-reports of the New Testament into full conversation with rhetoric and hermeneutics in a whole new way. She has produced a delightful work of great imagination and powerful argumentation in its own right."

--Duane F. Watson, professor of New Testament studies, Malone College

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