

*Sharers In Divine Nature: 2 Peter 1:4 in Its Hellenistic Context.*

By JAMES M. STARR. Stockholm, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International.

200. xiii + 304 pp.

This doctoral dissertation on sharing the divine nature is an important contribution to our understanding of spirituality. Though the author does not indicate an express desire to contribute to this area of study, the text itself addresses the issue by teaching the unique notion that we can share in God's nature. Starr does a good job of sorting out the details and relating 2 Peter to its entire New Testament context. He does so not only by a close examination of the context of 2 Peter but also by a detailed look at similar ideas expressed in Hellenistic literature. He concludes that we partake in God's nature when we share his moral characteristics.

Since the book is Starr's doctoral dissertation, it is most suitable for a reader willing to work through numerous details and references. In his analyses of the various Hellenistic authors Starr notes that many of them consider it a lifetime goal to become like God, though of course God is defined somewhat differently by each. For example, the Stoics equate god with reason. In his search for parallel ideas, he considers Josephus, Philo of Alexandria, Plutarch of Chaeroneia, and the Stoics. He also compares passages from the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament, differentiating between Pauline and non-Pauline texts.

Both the strength and weakness of the book are its comprehensiveness. His detailed analysis of the issue might render the book inaccessible to some, but this is what makes it so useful for others. Because it is the task of ministers and teachers to translate such matters into a more easily understood form for the person in the pew, I recommend the book for those involved in such pursuits. It will contribute to our understanding of what it means to grow into the image of Christ.

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