



## Theological Exegesis of 'Working Out Salvation' in Philippians 2:12-13: An Analysis of Soteriological Implications

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### ABSTRACT

The concept of "working out salvation" in Philippians 2:12-13 generates theological debate regarding divine sovereignty versus human responsibility in soteriology. This study provides exegetical analysis of Paul's theological framework addressing the Philippian church during persecution. Using historical-grammatical exegesis, this research examines Greek manuscripts and contemporary biblical scholarship through systematic theological methodology. The analysis reveals that "working out salvation" (*κατεργάζεσθε*) refers to sanctification actualization rather than earning salvation through works. The phrase emphasizes cooperative synergy between divine grace and human response, manifested through obedience, community engagement, and ethical transformation. Paul's concept presents balanced soteriology maintaining both divine sovereignty in salvation and human responsibility in sanctification, providing theological clarity for contemporary debates on salvation and Christian living.

**Keywords:** Exegesis; Philippians; Soteriology; Sanctification; Biblical Theology

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### INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul's exhortation to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" in Philippians 2:12-13 has generated considerable theological debate throughout Christian history. This passage presents a fundamental tension in soteriology: the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility in the process of salvation. While Protestant theology traditionally emphasizes salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*), Paul's imperative to "work out" salvation appears to introduce a human element that requires careful exegetical analysis. Contemporary biblical scholarship has approached this passage from various theological perspectives. Reformed theologians such as Carson (2019) interpret the phrase as sanctification rather than justification, emphasizing that salvation is entirely God's work while its outworking requires human participation. Conversely, Arminian scholars like Witherington (2020) argue for a more synergistic understanding where human response plays a cooperative role in salvation. Catholic theologians, including Fitzmyer (2018), view this text as supporting the concept of salvation through faith and works. These divergent interpretations underscore the need for comprehensive exegetical analysis.

The Greek term *κατεργάζεσθε* (*katergazesthe*) translated as "work out" presents particular hermeneutical challenges. Lexical studies by Silva (2021) demonstrate that this compound verb implies completion or actualization rather than initial creation. However, the relationship between this human activity and God's enabling work (v. 13) remains contentious. Fee's analysis (2019) suggests a cooperative model where divine enablement and human response function synergistically, while Thielman (2020) maintains a monergistic interpretation emphasizing divine priority.

The historical context of the Philippian church adds complexity to this interpretive challenge. Archaeological evidence indicates that Philippi was a Roman colony experiencing significant social and religious tensions (Hellerman, 2018). Paul's audience faced persecution, internal conflicts, and doctrinal challenges that required practical guidance for Christian living. Understanding how Paul's theological instruction addressed these specific circumstances is crucial for accurate interpretation.

This study addresses a significant gap in current scholarship by providing a comprehensive exegetical analysis that integrates lexical, grammatical, and theological dimensions of Philippians 2:12-13. While previous studies have focused on individual aspects of this passage, few have attempted a holistic approach that considers both the immediate context and broader Pauline theology. This research contributes to ongoing soteriological discussions by clarifying the precise meaning of "working out salvation" and its implications for contemporary Christian practice.

The significance of this study extends beyond academic theology to practical ecclesiology. Contemporary churches continue to grapple with questions of assurance, sanctification, and the role of works in salvation. A clearer understanding of Paul's instruction provides theological foundation for addressing these pastoral concerns. Furthermore, this analysis contributes to interfaith dialogue by clarifying Protestant understanding of salvation in relation to other Christian traditions.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative exegetical research design utilizing historical-grammatical hermeneutics to analyze Philippians 2:12-13. The research follows systematic theological methodology that integrates lexical analysis, contextual interpretation, and theological synthesis to achieve comprehensive understanding of the biblical text (Osborne, 2021). The methodology is grounded in the historical-grammatical method, which seeks to understand the original author's intended meaning within its historical and literary context (Fee & Stuart, 2020).

This approach involves three primary analytical dimensions: lexical analysis of key Greek terms, particularly *κατεργάζεσθε* (*katergazesthe*) and its semantic range within Pauline literature; grammatical analysis investigating syntactical structures, verbal aspects, and grammatical relationships within the immediate pericope; and contextual analysis assessing the passage within its immediate literary context, the broader epistle, and Paul's theological corpus.

The research utilizes both primary and secondary sources to ensure comprehensive analysis. Primary sources include the Greek New Testament using Nestle-Aland 28th edition and United Bible Societies 5th edition for textual analysis, ancient manuscripts such as Papyrus 46, Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus for examining textual variants, and early church commentaries providing patristic interpretations from Chrysostom, Augustine, and other church fathers. Secondary sources encompass peer-reviewed biblical commentaries from major academic publishers including Baker Academic, Eerdmans, and Zondervan Academic; scholarly articles from indexed theological

journals such as *Journal of Biblical Literature*, *New Testament Studies*, and *Biblica*; and lexical resources including theological dictionaries (TDNT, NIDNTT, BDAG) and lexicons for semantic analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Textual Analysis of Philippians 2:12-13

The exegetical analysis of Philippians 2:12-13 reveals that the phrase "work out your salvation" (κατεργάζεσθε τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν) represents a complex theological concept that requires careful linguistic and contextual examination. The Greek verb *κατεργάζεσθε* (*katergazesthe*) is a present middle imperative, indicating continuous action performed by the subject with personal involvement and benefit (Wallace, 2019). The compound structure of this verb, combining *κατά* (intensive prefix) with *ἐργάζομαι* (to work), emphasizes the completion or actualization of an existing reality rather than the creation of something new (Louw & Nida, 2018).

The immediate context of Philippians 2:12-13 follows Paul's presentation of the Christ hymn (2:6-11), which establishes the theological foundation for his practical exhortation. The conjunction *διό* (therefore) in verse 12 creates a logical connection between Christ's example of humble obedience and the believers' responsibility to manifest their salvation through obedient action. This structural relationship indicates that Paul's imperative is grounded in christological theology rather than soteriological uncertainty (Fee, 2020). The phrase "with fear and trembling" (μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου) reflects an attitude of reverent awe toward God's holiness and recognition of human dependence on divine grace, echoing Old Testament expressions of proper response to divine presence (Ps. 2:11; Is. 66:2).

### Lexical Investigation of Key Terms

#### *κατεργάζεσθε* (*katergazesthe*): Working Out

The semantic analysis of *κατεργάζεσθε* reveals its distinctive usage within Pauline literature. Unlike the simple verb *ἐργάζομαι*, which denotes general work or labor, *κατεργάζεσθε* specifically indicates the actualization or completion of an existing potential (Silva, 2021). In Romans 7:15-20, Paul employs this same verb to describe sin's actualization of evil desires, demonstrating its capacity to express the manifestation of inherent qualities or states. The middle voice construction emphasizes the believers' active participation in a process that ultimately benefits themselves, while the present tense indicates ongoing, continuous action rather than a single completed act.

Comparative analysis with other Pauline usages (2 Cor. 4:17; 7:10; Rom. 4:15; 5:3) confirms that *κατεργάζεσθε* consistently refers to the actualization of existing realities rather than the creation of new ones. This lexical evidence supports the interpretation that Paul is addressing the manifestation of salvation already possessed rather than the acquisition of salvation through human effort. The theological significance of this distinction cannot be overstated, as it maintains the Protestant principle of *sola gratia* while acknowledging legitimate human responsibility in sanctification.

### σωτηρία (soteria): Salvation

The term *σωτηρία* in Philippians 2:12 requires careful contextual analysis to determine its specific theological reference. While Protestant theology typically distinguishes between justification and sanctification, Paul's usage of *σωτηρία* encompasses both initial salvation and ongoing transformation (Thielman, 2020). The

immediate context suggests that Paul is addressing the practical outworking of salvation rather than its initial reception, as evidenced by his reference to the Philippians' previous obedience (v. 12a) and God's ongoing work within them (v. 13).

The phrase "your own salvation" (τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν) emphasizes personal responsibility while maintaining divine agency. The reflexive pronoun ἑαυτῶν indicates that each believer must personally engage in the process of salvation's actualization, yet verse 13 immediately clarifies that God provides both the desire and ability for this work. This paradoxical relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility reflects the mystery of cooperative grace central to Paul's theological framework.

### **Working on Safety**

Working out salvation is very important because working out salvation with fear and trembling means believers must live out their faith and live as disciples of Christ. Talking about salvation, this salvation is the core of the Gospel message. Because salvation is God's gift, without God's grace humans will not receive it safe (Anthony A. Hoekema, 2008).

As for salvation in the text that the author discusses, it is a command to work, given by the Apostle Paul as an expression of the Philippian church's obedience to Paul's instructions, this does not mean that the Philippian church had to work out salvation in order to be saved. But the word do is trying to fill life with spiritual fruit. To expose the words "doing safety", the author uses three analyses, namely context analysis, grammatical analysis, and lexical analysis.

### **Context Analysis**

Analyzing context needs to be viewed from the perspective that the context in the book of Philippians 2:12-13 must not be out of the text or moved from another text. Fenius Gulo & Pangeran Manurung said that: Based on context analysis, it appears that the term "do it" is advice to live according to the status that has been saved (Fenius Gulo & Pangeran Manurung, 2020).

In simple terms, working out salvation means living according to God's Word. This can be seen from the sentence in verse 12, "you always obey, therefore keep working on your salvation." The kind of obedience required in verse 12 seems very difficult to achieve, which is why Paul explains the secret. The secret lies in God. God who works the power from within humans (*energeo*).

The word *energeo* appears several times in the New Testament, including use by Paul. The meaning hanging in this word is "working with might" (Gal. 2:8; 3:5; 5:6; Eph. 2:2). God enables every believer to want (*thelo*) and capable (*energy*) obey Him. Human nature which is polluted by sin tends to be unable to be consistent in obeying God. Human obedience is sometimes influenced by certain situations and by sharing wrong motivations. Only God enables humans to give will and ability.

Thus, what you should do as a believer is to surrender to God's guidance. So, according to the explanation above, the context in the book of Philippians 2:12-13 is Paul's instruction to the Philippians to remain fully surrendered to God's leadership and bear fruit in God, fellowship with God and adhere to true teaching. Wagner in his book explains that Arminius said that; There is a person's hard effort to achieve a goal that has been set but has not been achieved. This means there is an invitation to live in the right way, so that other people can see that God

has saved the people in Philippi, this is the fruit of that salvation. Paul's intention for the Philippians in this struggle was not in obeying the Torah (John Wagner, 2011).

The Christian faith is often misunderstood. Some people think that faith expressed in obedience is called legalism. Some people feel that God works in human life, but humans do not experience change. Philippians 2:12-13 seems to present two different statements. In verse 12 Paul suggests that Christians strive for salvation. On the other hand, in verse 13 Paul emphasizes that God himself works out salvation.

The word "do" is translated from the word "*katēgazomai*" (κατεργάζομαι). Word "*katēgazomai*" often translated in English with the word "cause", "produce", "accomplish", "perform". If "*katēgazomai*" is translated with the word "cause" then the efforts of believers cause salvation. The efforts of believers do not save. Believers are saved only by grace (Stephen Renn, 2018).

The word "*katēgazomai*" when translated with words "produce" then it is believers who produce salvation. Humans in a state of spiritual death cannot possibly produce salvation. Man needs a savior to save himself from sin (James White, 2011). Word "*katēgazomai*" when translated with words "accomplish" then the believer completes salvation. Said "accomplish" gives an indication that the work of salvation is incomplete without human effort in salvation. The work of salvation was completely finished when Jesus said "it is finished" on the cross (John. 19:30) (Stephen Renn, 2018).

Word "*katēgazomai*" when translated with words "perform" then believers must show the fruit of their salvation in daily life consistently. In the context of Philippi, the Philippian congregation must show kindness to everyone in the same way (4:5) as when the apostle Paul was with the Philippian congregation because the day of the Lord was near (Wilkin and others, 2019). This command to "do" was given by the apostle Paul as an expression of the Philippian congregation's obedience to the apostle Paul's instructions. Even though the congregation faced various problems, the Philippian congregation had to maintain congregational unity, just like when the Apostle Paul was with the Philippian congregation. Based on the explanation above, the word "doing" is not related to personal efforts to obtain eternal life and is not related to losing the guarantee of salvation in eternity.

Philippians 2:12 is often used as a reference that salvation must be accomplished by humans. It is as if humans survived because of their own efforts. Erastus Sabdono uses Philippians 2:12 as a reference that every believer must work out salvation. According to Sabdono, human efforts to believe determine whether believers have the right to enter the eternal kingdom or not (Erastus Sabdono, 2019). This seems to strengthen the impression that salvation in Philippians 2:12 contradicts Ephesians 2:8-9, that salvation is a gift not because of humans. This causes confusion for believers whether salvation is only by grace or must be worked out as well.

According to Norman Geisler, salvation is divided into 3 stages. Believers should not be surprised that the Bible emphasizes believing at this stage. Believers are saved from the punishment of past sins (justification). Believers are being saved from the power of sin in the present (sanctification). Believers will be saved in the future from the presence of sin (glorification). Even though believers must work out salvation in the context of the present (v. 12), it is God who works in the lives of believers both in will and action (v. 13) (Norman Geisler, 2011).

Salvation in the context of Philippians as a whole to gain a comprehensive understanding of salvation and show the accurate context of salvation specifically in Philippians 2:12-13. The concept of salvation in the book of Philippians is related to Paul's imprisonment, the salvation experienced by the Philippians in the future after physical death, and the church's salvation from division due to the congregation's selfishness. The word "salvation" in Philippians 2:12-13 and Ephesians 2:8-9 certainly has a different context. The context of Philippians 2:12-13 is

salvation that believers must work for and the context of Ephesians 2:8-9 is salvation by grace through faith (Charles Swindoll, 2015).

So working on salvation in the book of Philippians is not a determinant of obtaining salvation or else salvation can be lost. The context of salvation in Philippians 2:12-13 is cooperative salvation, namely salvation from church division. The Philippian congregation is in danger of being divided because they are more focused on their own selfishness and seeking personal gain in the name of service, considering themselves more important than others, seeking vain praise, grumbling and arguing when doing things ministry (Tolop Marbun, 2020).

### Close Context

The opening section (Phil. 1:1-11) as usual in Paul's letters contains greetings, gratitude and intercession for the church. In his prayer (Phil. 1:9-11) there is hope that the Philippian congregation will increasingly overflow in knowledge, in all kinds of correct understanding; so that the congregation expresses its loyalty to welcome the day of Christ and so that they achieve the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ. This passage also notes that Paul was imprisoned for the purpose of making it clear to the entire court and everyone else about the progress of the Gospel (Phil. 1:12-13).

Christ is the God who holds command over all spiritual powers that are considered to dominate human life. God has empowered Christ to implement a "de facto" government (Donald Guthrie, 1994). Then Paul gave an appeal for the congregation to live a life that would lead to God's salvation, for now and for eternity (Phil. 2:12-18). Salvation cannot be done by humans alone, but it is God who helps His congregation or His people by giving them will and work according to His will (Phil. 2:13).

Paul gives encouragement to the church on how to work on salvation without complaining and arguing so that there is purity in the church (Phil. 2:14). And in the end, Paul gives advice so that the salvation that is done can be a testimony to others (Donald Guthrie, 1994). Paul uses the word *harpagmos* to explain the uniqueness of Christ's divinity. Through this term, Paul teaches that even though he is God, Christ does not take into account or maintain His equality with God the Father. Rather, Christ allowed His honor, glory and divinity to be abolished or taken away within Himself, so that Christ could become like servants and humans. But His divinity, greatness and omnipotence as God never left Him. But on the contrary, when Christ emptied himself of his divinity, at the same time Christ remained true God.

However, turning to Philippians 2:8, Bauer says that: the important word in Philippians 2:8 that shows the essence of the servant leadership of Jesus Christ is the word *ἐταπείνωσεν* (*etapeinosen*). Word *ἐταπείνωσεν* (*etapeinosen*) is a verb that has a time description *indicative aorist active third person singular* from the root of the word *ταπεινώω* (*tapeino*). So, the word "tapeino" has several meanings, including to suppress, to embarrass (inwardly), to humiliate, to bring low, to be brought low liver Bauer and others, 2001). Therefore, if we look at the third characteristic of Jesus Christ's servant leadership, Bouer says that: Jesus' obedience was expressed by being obedient to the point of death on the cross.

The word obey in Philippians 2:8 uses a Greek word *ὑπήκοος* (*hupēkos*) which means to listen attentively, submit, obey. So, the humility expressed in the obedience of Jesus Christ is not something that is forced, because Jesus Christ not only wanted to do it, but Jesus truly became an obedient person from what He did and this is the total form of the humility of Jesus Christ.

Eka Darmaputra said that: Christ's willingness to die on the cross provides a very valuable rule for the obedience of His followers. The words "obedient unto death" has radical sacrificial implications. This is proof that this obedience is unconditional. Unconditional obedience is a measure of perfect and ideal obedience, which is the parameter of believers' obedience. However, it must be noted that obedience must come from a heart that has the integrity to obey (Eka Darmaputra, 2005).

So, the obedience referred to here is unconditional obedience, and by Jesus' obedience to the point of death, Paul reminded the congregation in Philippi who had been saved to continue working on salvation, namely the fruit of that salvation. And even Paul wanted to give the church in Philippi a most valuable position, namely joy in living for Christ, because of the obedience and love of the Philippians to Paul who was so persistent in teaching the truth and helping Paul's ministry when Paul was imprisoned.

### **Remote Context**

In the Philippian context, the Philippian congregation must show kindness to each neighbor (4:5) as when the Apostle Paul was with the Philippian congregation, because the day of the Lord was near (Wilkin and others, 2019). Immediately knowing what would happen to him, Paul planned to send Timothy to the Philippian congregation (Phil. 2:19). He recommended Timothy to the Philippians and called him a man worthy of trust. But apart from that, he still wanted to visit the Philippian congregation. Paul also wanted to send Ephaphroditus as a messenger to the church in Philippi who had been ill while with Paul, but who had now recovered (Phil. 2:25-28). Paul also reminded the Philippians to be careful of dogs, evil workers and false circumcisers (Phil. 3:2-4:3). John R. Tan said that; Paul wrote with great love of joy and gratitude towards the faithfulness of the Philippians (John R. Tan, 2007).

Paul prayed that the Philippians would grow in knowledge, so that the Philippians would be able to distinguish between wrong and right, between good and evil (v. 9b-10a). What is meant by knowledge here is of course knowledge of God's word. Paul also prayed that the Philippians would be holy (v. 10b-11), holy without blemish (v. 10b), which actually means being full of the fruit of righteousness (v. 11). Meanwhile, the fruit of righteousness was carried out by Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:22-23). Indeed, the object of faith that is considered truth is Christ. But Gundry emphasizes that what is important is faith in Christ, not Christ as the object of faith. Denial of the instrumental function of faith does not mean that faith is considered an action. Because faith is a gift, not a deed (Phil. 1:29; Rom. 10:17; 12:3). And faith is contrary to works. Paul emphasized that it is not the believer's works that are righteous, in Philippians 3:9 but faith (John R. Tan, 2007).

Chris Marantika says that: there are two Greek words in Philippians 3:20-21 that are worth paying attention to when discussing the concept *πολίτευμα* (*politeuma*). Word *πολίτευμα*, explains the rights and obligations of citizenship, pointing to the privileges of being a citizen of two kingdoms, namely the kingdom of God on earth and in heaven. This means that believers are citizens of earth as well as citizens of heaven, although this also means that there is great responsibility (Chris Marantika, 2002).

So, in analyzing the distant context the author concludes that Paul is talking about the truth of what Paul has done or done to the Philippian congregation, that the truth that God gave Paul was based on belief in the God that Paul already knew.

### **Grammatical Analysis**

This grammatical analysis aims to focus on paying attention to the direction of the text in its context. In order to interpret the text of Philippians 2:12-13 to be more focused, it is necessary to pay attention to all the elements in the text and various indications in the context. According to Jacob, directness is the directness of the literary unity of a book or letter which is addressed explicitly and the directness of the part of the text in the smallest unit which is directly related to the text (Jacob van Bruggen, 2013).

The church in Philippi was ordered to carry out (*katergapmai*, keep doing it, is form *continuous present*) liberation of the church until it reaches Christian maturity. Humility regarding their deliverance was natural because, although they were working together, it was God who had created in them both the will and the ability (He "gave the strength" *energeo*) according to His good will or, promoting good will, namely harmony in the congregation at Philippi (Everett F. Harrison, 2020). The emphasis of Everett's explanation is that it is God who works in humans for salvation because of God's grace. In the Encyclopedia we want to explain from the verb that: The main words here are Hebrew *ma'aseh* (181 times), 'work', deed, (cf. Gen. 5:29; Ex. 5:4, etc., especially psalms about God's work, see Ps. 8:3,6; etc.); *mela'kha* (117 times; bnd. Kej. 2:2,3; Kel. 20:9, dll); *po'al* (30 times), 'deeds' (bnd. Deut. 32:4, etc.). Greece *ergon* (142 times) often appears in John, Hebrews, James and Revelation). Quite rarely used is word *energeia* which is abstract, literally means 'power'. It is a typical Pauline word (Eph. 1:19; 3:7; 4:16; Phil. 3:21; Col. 1:29; 2 Thess., 2:9). It is worth noting the Hebrew words *yegi'a*, 'work', 'fatigue', and 'charity', 'work', 'misery'; bnd. Greece *kopiao*, 'work', 'toil' (cf. Mat. 11:28; Joh. 4:38, etc.), and *ergates*, 'worker' (Matt. 9:37, 38; 20:1-2, 8; Luke 10:2, 7; James 5:4) (J.D Douglas, 1962). Douglas explained that the verb is literal and means energy. So in this work, you must have strong energy and remain standing in the truth. Thus it is still a continuation of the Encyclopedia: In classical Greek verbs *kopiao* refers to the hardships brought about by work, but in the New Testament, the word refers to the work itself (Matt. 6:28; 11:28; Luke 5:5; 12:27; John 4: 38).

Word *ergates* refers to the enterprise or trade by which a person earns a living (Acts 19:24), and is used also to indicate profits resulting from activities (Acts 16:16, 19) as well as the work involved in the pursuit of profit. *Ergasia* has an ethical meaning in Ephesians 4:19 and literally means 'doing'; vs. 'worker' (*ergates*) in Luke 13:27; 2 Corinthians 11:13; Philippians 3:2, and in a good sense Matthew 10:10; 2 Timothy 2:15 (J. D. Douglas, 1962). Humans obtain salvation because of God's grace, not from human efforts or works themselves.

Thus, it is still a continuation of Douglas's explanation of salvation that: If salvation truly works in believers, then fellowship (*koinonia*) they will increase in the Spirit. And the saving power of God, which works 'vertically' downwards, makes them aware of the 'horizontal' impact on society and what must come of having that salvation. Those who have salvation must be the light of the world, the salt of the earth, a city on a mountain. Church history shows how the church has learned and still must learn to witness prophetically to salvation in every age.

The salvation given by God makes a person called from the old life to a new life. Being created new in Christ means renewal from old life to new life. This is called rebirth. Rebirth is a spontaneous and miraculous change carried out by the Holy Spirit in the character of individuals who receive the Lord Jesus. So being born again involves understanding; new creation, new life, migration from death, renewal, giving a new nature, namely the nature of God, and a new purpose in life (Harold M. Frelingh, 1995). So in conclusion, "keep working on your salvation" The Apostle Paul is talking about the fruit of the salvation that has been obtained.

From the results of the discussion, it was found that working on salvation means the fruit of that salvation, not working to obtain salvation. Working out salvation means opposing sin and following the will of the Holy Spirit, which includes continuous efforts to use every means ordained by God to defeat evil and reveal the life of Christ.

Thus working out salvation which is centered on the importance of sanctification. Working out salvation always means drawing closer to God and receiving His power to reveal the truth and obey His will.

### Lexical Analysis

In connection with the word "work out salvation", it comes from the root word "work out salvation." According to Fenius Gulo & Pangeran Manurung, the word do comes from Greek, namely, "*katergazomai*" (κατεργάζομαι) means to complete, not to produce something that did not previously exist (Phil. 2:12 and Eph. 6:13 both use the same word). The English version translates this verse as "*work out your salvation not work for your salvation.*" Then the word "your" in the phrase "your salvation" in Greek is plural. The use of the plural shows that the author is not discussing individual safety but community safety (Fenius Gulo & Pangeran Manurung, 2020).

So from the opinions of the two figures above, it can be explained that the text, work on your salvation, is talking about salvation as a community, to produce the fruit of that salvation.

### CONCLUSION

A theological examination of the phrase "work out your salvation" in Philippians 2:12–13 affirms that Paul does not teach salvation by works, but rather emphasizes the actualization of salvation in the life of believers through the process of sanctification. The exegesis of the term *κατεργάζεσθε* within its historical and grammatical context shows that the "working out" of salvation is not a self-initiated human effort, but an active response to the grace of God who first works within the believer. Thus, Paul presents a harmonious synergy between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God is the one who works within (v.13), producing both the will and the ability to act according to His good purpose, while believers are called to live in obedience, ethical integrity, and communal engagement as an expression of saving faith.

This conclusion makes a significant contribution to contemporary soteriological debates by offering a balanced model of salvation one that upholds God's sovereign role while also affirming the believer's active participation in the sanctification process. In light of this text, the Christian life is not merely a status to be received, but a calling to be lived dynamically and faithfully in response to God's saving work.

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