

## EXEGETICAL PHRASE "KEEP WORKING ON YOUR SALVATION" ACCORDING TO PHILIPPIANS 2:12

Apiyusu La<sup>1)</sup> Widi Prasetyo<sup>2)</sup> Connie Laurina<sup>3)</sup>

1) *Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia – Surabaya*  
*E-mail: apiyusu@sttii-surabaya.ac.id*

2) *Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia – Surabaya*  
*E-mail: widiprasetyo@sttii-surabaya.ac.id*

3) *Evangelical Theological Seminary of Indonesia – Surabaya*  
*E-mail: connielaurina@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

*Considering the influence of teaching in God's churches as well as writings on salvation are still contradictory, the writer must immediately write this paper with enthusiasm and joy. Anxiety occurs when among believers themselves still adhere to two to three understandings of salvation. First, there are those who argue that salvation is entirely from God and there is no human contribution in doing it. Because humans are sinners and do not have any reason for doing salvation. Second, there are those who argue that salvation is done by humans, God is only the provider. And the result is that many think that man will lose his salvation if he is not sincere in working for his salvation. Third, there are those who argue that salvation in Philippians 2:12 is a collaboration between God and man. God works and man must also work. Some of the focus problems above can produce good and bad qualities. Because there are some people who claim to believe but do not work out their salvation, but live as they please because they believe that the sins of the past, present and future sins of the Lord Jesus have been completed. Philippians 2:12 will consistently explore the true meaning, whether it is really God who works one hundred percent without human contribution or humans who have to work on salvation and God is the only provider.*

**Keywords:** *Salvation, Jesus Christ, Doctrine, Eternal Safety, Church.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Every generation throughout the history of the church has witnessed doctrinal struggles and debates. Various heresies kept attacking the church, causing heated debates and even disagreements on many occasions.[1] Hoekema reveals the

interrelationship between soteriology and other aspects, as follows: What should be stated further is the relationship between soteriology and other aspects of Christian theology. Soteriology is of course closely related to the doctrine of God, because soteriology is about God, which will

lead to an inadequate understanding of soteriology. One-sided attitude that merely emphasizes God's sovereignty will give rise to the message that God saves His people like computers controlling robots. On the other hand, the sheer emphasis on human responsibility will result in a God who is completely dependent on human decisions, thus rendering Him simply a God who has to wait on the sidelines, hoping that people will be so kind as to accept the invitation of the Gospel, without having the slightest bit of control over acceptance. Both understandings of soteriology like this are not in accordance with the teachings of the Bible.[2] It must be admitted that to understand the Doctrine of Soteriology is not an easy thing. The difficulty in understanding this lesson must also be acknowledged as having resulted in many theological conflicts which have hitherto been unresolved and have been the struggles of theologians, philosophers and even congregations.[3]

Jusuf B.S. says that in explaining the lesson of the salvation, there are at least two interpretations, a calvinism and others. The two are contradictory, it is impossible for all of them to be right, but each party feels that he is right. This is all due to differences in

an interpretation, but this does not include things that are misguided, because both of them believe in the Lord Jesus as Savior and are sure that they will be safe in heaven.[4] Michael L. B., in his book says the following: "The church at the end of the twentieth century is going through a crisis. For years, we have preached the cheap gospel and peddled lenient Savior.

We have taught a salvation without a self-denial and crowns without a cross. We have satisfied the unsaved and compromised with the world. Now, we are paying the price. The preaching of "an immediate salvation" has humiliated God and deceived mankind. The seeds of our guilt have produced a perishable crop. We are reaping a truly pitiful harvest![5]" That is why the church is facing a paradox, which means stating what appears to be contrary to a public opinion or the truth, but in fact contains the truth.[6] A combination of two contradictory thoughts, where on one hand God must sanctify us as whole, but on the other hand we must work out our sanctification by perfecting our holiness.[7]

The issue of the phrase keeps working your safety has become a serious problem. Why is this a serious problem? Because the phrase is interpreted differently by one sect of Christianity and also from a Christian sect. It has entered into the full teaching of one of the sects of Christianity and even

falls into the category of the inviolable confession of faith. The sect incorporates this phrase into AD ART, especially with a regard to the profession of faith. For more specifics can be seen from the official website.[8] The Confession of Faith is contained in a chapter III Article 6 number 7, which reads as follows : “We believe in the salvation of sinners, spirits, souls and bodies by grace and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and all believers must maintain a salvation, holiness, faithfulness and if they do not maintain it, that a salvation can be lost. (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:18; Philipians 2:12; Matthew 24:13; Hebrews 3:12; II Peter 2:20-22; 1:4-11; Jude 1:3).[9]

According to the quote above, salvation can be lost if it is not maintained by all believers. It is as if the statement is specific that when people believe there is potential for loss of salvation. Even Jusuf B. S. commented that there are other teachings that Christians believe in, which are actually wrong and classifies them as Pentecostal churches that believe in their salvation. But must be preserved to the end, so that they are not lost.

This opinion arises because there are also many within the Christian school itself; there are still many issues that do not agree with one another. Seeing this, the writer needs to examine more deeply whether it is

true that the verse says that, or if not, then teaching like this needs to be worried about. The number of souls or members of this sect currently reaches around 3-3.5 million people. The number of souls that are not small need to be worried if they are not equipped with teaching the meaning of the Bible properly.

An Indonesian theologian has also given an opinion about working on a salvation as stated in the journal was Tolop Oloan Marbun writing the response of well-known a theologian in Indonesia today, namely Erastus Sabdono, who said that the efforts of every believer will determine whether a believer has the right to enter the kingdom. Permanent or not. In addition to the above sects, there is a sect of Christianity that distorts the phrase in the letter of Philipians, namely Jehovah's Witnesses who say that continue to work for our own salvation.[13] This statement drew many comments from the part of true Christians. Jehovah's Witnesses continue to do this for the sake of their teachings and to spread things to anyone who follows their teachings as expressed by Herlianto about the salvation doctrine held by Jehovah's Witnesses as follows: For Christians who believe, God grants them salvation to achieve eternal life.

Thus, believing Christians have confidence in the promised a salvation.

Because of the gift he has received, Christians are burdened with doing God's will and preaching the gospel throughout the world. On the other hand, Jehovah's Witnesses do not have that assurance of a salvation, in fact they are guaranteed not to enter heaven because heaven is already full of 144,000 candidates who have existed since that number was filled in 1953. And at any time if he does not carry out the field service diligently or is declared an apostasy by the Jehovah's Witnesses organization, his salvation could be lost.[14]. When one realizes that Jehovah's Witnesses currently spend more than 1.4 billion man-hours each year spreading these doctrines around the world, it is clear that Christians must be equipped to answer these cult followers directly. [15]

### RESEARCH METHOD

To Exegetical Philippians 2:12 on "keep working on your salvation" the author uses research methods with a qualitative approach to a literature study or the word study analysis. According to Bogdan and Taylor, qualitative methods are defined as research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. In the discussion of this scientific article the author uses word studies or what is called exegesis, the word exegesis itself

comes from the transliteration of the Greek term exegesis ( Noun), which comes from the verb Exegeomai. The literal meaning of the word is "to bring out". an exegesis is an accurate elaboration of the meaning of a particular text.

The term comes from the Greek Exegesis which means " an explanation. Based on the background, problem formulation, and the purpose of this paper as follows. That is, to know the meaning of the word work your salvation in Philippians 2:12.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Textual Analysis Of Philippines 2:12

First Reading Variant that uses : "Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε· (Phil. 2:12 BGT).

Grammatically, if Paul omitted the word then the phrase could change its meaning.

Using the word ὡς:

Ὡστε, ἀγαπητοί μου, καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε, μὴ ὡς ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ μου μόνον ἀλλὰ νῦν πολλῶ μᾶλλον ἐν τῇ ἀπουσίᾳ μου, μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου τὴν ἑαυτῶν σωτηρίαν κατεργάζεσθε· (Phil. 2:12 BGT) Translated:

"Therefore, my beloveds, just as you obeyed not only in my presence, but even

more so now that I am absent, with fear and trembling your salvation works. "Translation problems if you omit the word: Then it is translated as follows: Therefore, my beloveds, just as you obeyed not only in my presence, but even more so now that I am absent, with fear and trembling your salvation works. " First, if the word is still used in the translation, it will be an encouragement for the Philippians to continue to live in obedience. Second, if the word is omitted, the sentence will only be a statement, that they have indeed obeyed without any encouragement.

Grammatically, the function of the word is very influential because the word as a conjunction that explains. In context, the use of the word is ὡς closely related to the condition of the Philippian Church, which is written in chapter 1, namely Paul commends the church because of their fellowship. Their fellowship in the Gospel message started from the first time they heard the Gospel until the day Paul wrote the letter (1:3).

### **Structural Explanation**

From several structural explanations of working on safety, there are two words that are directly connected to the word work in the structure, namely:

First, the word γάρ (gar), expresses the reason for working salvation. So, the

reason for working salvation structurally is because God is constantly working in you. The phrase, the term ὁ γένεργων "energon" is an active present participle which refers to "continuous effective work. The difference between and is that "katergazeste is self-limited and is also an imperative whereas "energon" is work that is continuously carried out effectively and this is not an order. The culprit is which is placed in front of the sentence structurally.

Second, the word (katos), which states a subordinate conjunction. Which states the way (manner) The way to do salvation structurally is to express firmness with the use of indicatives. The word katos is translated as "same as" while the word is translated as "which you have obeyed". If the two words are combined, it is translated as "just as you have obeyed". The nature of obedience in question is always.

The obedience required was both alone time (the congregation) and when Paul was not among them. That obedience must be maintained even in the midst of an evil generation. The focus of their obedience was on getting to the day of Christ.

### **Grammatical Analysis**

Grammatically the phrase "keep working on your salvation, focusing on the obedience of the Philippians when Paul was

in their midst and when Paul was not around. The Philippians are required to work on salvation by producing something from their actions, namely doing it, there is an imperative case use case, the word *κατεργάζεσθε* is an order that is carried out continuously (present) and an order is carried out for oneself (middle). It means you are constantly earning for yourself.

### **The lexical meaning of the word “κατεργάζομαι”**

The word "does" in Greek is divided into several parts, as follows:

#### ***Ergazomai***

This word is used: First, intransitively, for example Matt. 21:28; John 5:17; 9:4; Romans 4: 4,5; 1 Cor 4:12; 9:6; 1 Thess 2:9; 4:11; 2 Thess 3: 8,10-12. Second, transitively, (a) "does something, produces, does," for example, in Matt. 26:10, "he has done"; John 6:28,30; 9; Acts 10:35; 13:41; Romans 2:10; 13:10; 1 Cor 16:10; 2 Cor 7:10 a, in the RV, the word is translated “let us work”; Eph 4:28; Heb 11:33; 2 John 8; (b) "earned by working, working for", John 6:27, "to work" (KJV "labor")

#### ***Katergazomai (κατεργάζομαι)***

Having a firm form, it signifies “to work, achieve, effect by toil,” also

translated “to work” (past form, “wrought”) in Rom. 1:27; 2:9, RV; 4:15 (The law cursed men and made them subject to divine wrath); 5:3; 7:8,13; 15:18; 4:17; 5:5; 7:10, 11; 12:12; 12, where "your own salvation" refers primarily to freedom from strife and pride; James 1:3,20; 1 Peter 4:3. Also the word *katergazomai* labor, working or engaging in activities involving a considerable expenditure of effort) a means to work out fully and thoroughly, to reach or reach an end (implying thoroughness), to complete or bring about something to the conclusion. Work to bring something to a successful fulfillment or completion and implies doing something with rigor. It means doing what produces something. This verb always means to finish the work and start the work.

*Katergazomai* was used by Roman writers (Strabo – 60 BC) [16] to describe the workings of silver mines with the aim of extracting all the valuable ore. By analogy, we are commanded to "mine" from our lives all the riches of salvation that God has graciously stored within us. With Spirit-supported effort and perseverance, we must work and perfect in daily behavior the precious “ore” that God has placed in us when He blessed us with “every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” in Christ (Eph 1 :3) and "give us all that is necessary for life and godliness through true

knowledge of" Jesus our Lord. (2 Peter 1:3).

### ***Energieo***

This word is translated "to work in" or "to be active, operative," is used of " (a) God, 1 Cor 12:6; Gal 2:8; 3:5; Eph 1:11,20; 3: 20; Phil 2:13 a; Col 1:29; (b) Holy Spirit, 1 Cor 12:11; (c) Word of God, 1 Thess 2:13 (middle voice; KJV, 'works effectively'); (d) supernatural powers, undefined, Mt 14:2; Mark 6:14; (e) faith, as the energizer of love, Gal 5:6; (f) an example of patience in suffering, 2 Cor 1:6; (g) ) death (physical) and life (spiritual), 2 Cor 4:12; (h) sinful lust, Rom 7:5 ; (i) spirit of the Evil One, Eph 2:2; (j) mystery of evil, 2 Thess 2: 7.

### ***Poieo***

The word Poieo can mean "to do," or "to work" as recorded in Matthew 20:12, while Acts 15:12, "was wrought."

### **Phrases “καθὼς ὑπηκούσατε”**

First, the meaning of the phrase “πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε” as obedience at all times. The word is an adverb which means "always or always" to describe an action that is always or always to be done. For clarity, we will look at the word in the second person plural active aorist indicative verb form. Describes the actions after doing or after the people did/obeyed”. The use of aorists in this passage affirms obedience to

what they have done and is encouraged to continue to obey it.

Second, the meaning of the phrase “καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε” is a stipulation that must be obeyed or still implemented. So that the more relevant meaning is that they must know things as an unbreakable stipulation in the journey of spiritual life. The word πάντοτε is an adverb derived from the word πας . Which explains if this is addressed to all the Philippians without exception. While the word is derived from the word This is a type of verb that has a plural form. Aorist, active, inductive. Which can be explained if the word obey refers to all the Philippians who always practice obedience in their daily lives. The indicative shows if this is a sure thing to happen in the Philippian church.

Third, the meaning of the phrase “καθὼς πάντοτε ὑπηκούσατε” is also an action that takes place. Based on the grammatical analysis, the word ὑπηκούσατε is an action that is taken in the present in earnest or something that is carried out.

### **Phrases “μετὰ καὶ”**

The word has a preposition or preposition, indicating ownership, here the word refers to the Philippians. While the words φόβου and τρόμου are masculine singular genitive nouns. Where refers to a thing that every Philippians church must

have personally. Thus, fear and trembling is a must have by the Philippians.

The word *κατεργάζεσθε* is a second person plural verb, which shows. The present here indicates that doing this safety must be done right away. Or at this very moment. The use of "middle" shows the person doing the salvation for himself, the subject applies the action to himself, and the last is the imperative which shows a command word that must be done. So here *κατεργάζεσθε* refers to the effort that the Philippians must make for themselves or for themselves.

First, the meaning of the phrase "*κατεργάζεσθε σωτηρίαν*" as a command to bear fruit. The use of the word *κατεργάζεσθε* shows how deep the meaning is expressed by the author so that those who are ordered to actually do the work to continue (present) until they bear fruit. The word *κατεργάζεσθε* in the form of the imperative verb present middle second person common singular is an action that boils down to themselves (for yourself) "middle" not for someone else. The free translation is for your own sake. so, they can eat their own fruit.

Second, the meaning of "*κατεργάζεσθε σωτηρίαν*" as work because of the cause. The phrase "*κατεργάζεσθε τὴν σωτηρίαν*" is identified through the structure that the work/action is valid when

it is caused by something. Something pushed the work. Therefore, they do not act without cause and do not walk without orders. But because there is an order that they can work.

Third, the meaning of "*κατεργάζεσθε τὴν σωτηρίαν*" as wages worked. The phrase "*κατεργάζεσθε τὴν σωτηρίαν*" is the genetic case used in the personal pronoun. It means that working here is the wages they already have that is what they are really working on. The use of the word *τὴν* does use the accusative case which is generally a final object, but in this section the use of the word *τὴν* emphasizes the noun in question, namely the word which has a genetic case.

### **Phrases "θεὸς ἔστιν"**

The meaning of "*θεὸς ἔστιν*" as the main actor of work and safety. The word "*θεὸς*" in the singular common masculine nominative noun form. the use of the nominative case in this word tells us that the main actor or subject is Theos. Meanwhile, the word "*ἔστιν*" uses the indicative mode which means that there is an individual who actually acts. So it can be interpreted that I am God who acts earnestly. Because God is acting that we can identify now is the use of active and passive words. How to identify it? In the word "*κατεργάζεσθε*" (do it = verb = imperative = act human) is an order that does not include any action, either active or

passive. While the word "ἐνεργῶν" uses the present active and nominative participles (to do = verb = participle = God who acts). If the word uses a participle, then there are two actions taken at the same time by Theos in this case, namely acting in "κατεργάζεσθε" and also acting in "ἐνεργῶν".

### **Conclusion of Exegetical Analysis**

Through exegetical analysis, working on salvation is a continuous progress that is carried out until it comes to fruition because God works in the believer. Therefore, without fear and trembling, but believe or be a light in the midst of the wicked while holding on to the Word of Truth until the end of the Lord Jesus coming the second time.

In the modern interpretation of the Bible, it says that He is the giver of salvation. But salvation is not to be complacent, but to be worked out in life with zeal, reverence and fear, by people who know that they are living under His holy sight and must be accountable to Him.[17]

### **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the author will conclude the analysis of the concept of working out salvation in Philippians 2:12. In the text of the Epistle to Philippians, Paul as the author wrote that the important thing related to salvation is grace and a representation of the salvation of Christ. Although Paul wrote

briefly, Paul emphasized how important it is to work out salvation by being obedient even with fear and trembling.

Of course it gave encouragement to the Philippians at that time and answered their problem in the Church, it has been discussed in detail in the previous chapters. So in this chapter, we provide conclusions and suggestions in several practices in the ministry, such as God's servants as teachers, pastors, church leaders and moreover to Jehovah's witnesses who are also one of the backgrounds of this paper. This paper can be used to build the right teaching and correct systematics, especially regarding the concept of salvation.

For believers, Salvation is one of the most important doctrines and must be taught properly, but for some churches and Jehovah's witnesses they ignore it. Even the issue of salvation is still taught in confusion in the teaching of the doctrine of salvation in the fellowship of believers.

Philippians 2:12 is very important to be taught to believers. This is the answer to the heresy that ignores God's grace, and seeks each one's way to his salvation. The thought that through action or hard work you can get salvation and if you don't do it, salvation will be lost or fall. Philippians chapter 2:12 is the answer to that argument. There were three things Paul expected from the Philippians. First, it shows that the standard

of obedience of believers, such as the obedience of Christ to death on the cross.(2:8).

Second, he shows that obedience continues both in time and in Paul's absence to encourage believers in their progressive spiritual life, namely the salvation that believers have received that is already theirs (Philippians 2:12-13). ). Third, encourage believers so that believers become light, while holding on to the Word. After doing the exegesis against Philippians 2:12, concerning keep working your salvation according to Philippians 2:12

First, the concept of working out salvation in Philippians 2:12, cannot be interpreted as a process of obtaining or seeking salvation. The phrase has at least two kinds of meaning, grammatically it means to bear fruit from salvation. And exegetically means responsibility. So that it cannot be denied that the salvation that is owned is a responsibility that bears fruit. Second, working on safety is working for safety progressively being worked on to earn from what one already has.

Third, working on salvation does not stop at a certain point in time, but the command (present) is continuously carried out. Fourth, salvation is a gift, not sought or attempted by humans, because God does it without any human being to be proud of through good deeds.

Fifth, working on salvation is not an argument that salvation can be lost or lost, losing salvation. This clearly refutes the previous argument which says that working out salvation is the final determination to enter heaven, and says that salvation can be lost if it is not done, and says that salvation will fail if it is not worked for. Sixth, taking Philippians 2:12 as a reference to obtain eternal salvation is not justified because salvation in Philippians 2:12 is not talking about eternal salvation.

The writings in Philippians chapter 2:12 cannot be ignored or avoided in the use of word for word. It can be seen that the oldest manuscripts quote Paul's writings, namely P46. The oldest manuscripts show that all of the texts in Philippians 2:12 are important, so as not to omit the true meaning of the text itself. This has been discussed in more detail in an earlier textual analysis.

## REFERENCES

- [1] R. C. Sproul, *Fait Alone* "Hanya Melalui Iman" (Sidoarjo: Mitra Pustaka, 1995)
- [2] Anthony Hoekema, *Diselamatkan Oleh Anugerah* (Surabaya: Momentum Christian Literature, 2001)
- [3] Fenius Gulo, Pengeran Manurung, *Kontribusi Iman dalam Keselamatan "Jawaban atas Isu-isu Soteriologi-Hamartologi Kontemporer"* (Sidoarjo: Bible Culture Study, 2020)

- [4] Pdt. Yusuf B.S., *Keselamatan Tidak Bisa Hilang?* Edisi I Cetakan I, Juni 1996
- [5] Michael L. Brown, *Pastikah Keselamatan Kita?* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pekabaran Injil Immanuel, 2001)
- [6] Budiono, MA, *Kamus Lengkap Bahasa Indonesia* (Surabaya: Karya Agung, 2005)
- [7] Anthony A. Hoekema, *Diselamatkan Oleh Anugerah* (Surabaya, Momentum Christian Literature, 2000)
- [8] Gpdi.or.id
- [9] <http://gpditm38.blogspot.com/p/anggaran-dasar-gereja-pantekosta-di.html> diakses tanggal 13 Januari 2021 pukul WIB.
- [10] Pdt. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang, *Belajar Memahami Sejarah di Tengah Realitas*, (Bandung: Jurnal Info Media, 2008)
- [11] Pdt. Dr. Jan S. Aritonang, *Belajar Memahami Sejarah di Tengah Realitas*, (Bandung: Jurnal Info Media, 2008), 119.
- [12] Bandingkan dengan Erastus Sabdono dalam Jurnal Tolop Oloan Marbun, Juni 2020. “*Kajian Biblika Tentang Keselamatan Berdasarkan Kitab Filipi 2:12*” BONAFIDE: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen, [www.jurnal.sttissiau.ac.id/Volume\\_1/Nomor\\_1/Juni\\_2020/](http://www.jurnal.sttissiau.ac.id/Volume_1/Nomor_1/Juni_2020/), diakses pada tanggal 14 November 2020 pukul 10:55 WIB.
- [13] <https://wol.jw.org/id/wol/d/r25/lpin/1998803>, diakses tanggal 15 Januari 2021 pukul 11:11 WIB.=
- [14] Herlianto, *Saksi-saksi Yehuwa*, (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2004)
- [15] Ron Rodhes, *Berdiskusi dari Alkitab dengan Saksi-saksi Yehuwa*, (Malang: LITERATUR SAAT, 2016)
- [16] Strabo, *Katergazomai*, [https://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians\\_212-18#2:12](https://www.preceptaustin.org/philippians_212-18#2:12), diakses tanggal 14 April 2021 pukul 14:35 WIB
- [17] *The New Bible Commentary*, London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1976