

## A Biblical Study of Monergism (God's Sovereignty in Salvation)

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## Authority of Scripture

**The reason that the scripture is authoritative is because of who it's author is.**

**2 Timothy 3:16** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness

**1 Peter 1:20-21** knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**1Thessalonians 2:13** And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

**Mathew 4:4** "It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

# Submission to Scripture

## Why we should submit to the Authority of the Word of God

**John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.

**1 Corinthians 15:2** ...you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain.

**James 1:22** But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

**1 John 2:5** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him:

**Palms 119:11** I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

**Palms 119:105** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

**John 8:31** So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples..."

**John 14:23-24** Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

## Warning for those who don't submit themselves to the authority of the Word of God

**Proverbs 13:13** Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

**John 12:48** The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day.

**Isaiah 66:2** God delights in everyone who "trembles" at his word

*Throughout the history of the church the greatest preachers have been those who have recognized that they have no authority in themselves and have seen their task as being to explain the words of Scripture and apply them clearly to the lives of their hearers. Their preaching has drawn its power not from the proclamation of their own Christian experiences or the experiences of others, nor from their own opinions, creative ideas, or rhetorical skills, but from God's powerful words. Essentially they stood in the pulpit, pointed to the biblical text, and said in effect to the congregation, "This is what this verse means. Do you see that meaning here as well? Then you must believe it and obey it with all your heart, for God himself, your Creator and your Lord, is saying this to you today!" Only the written words of Scripture can give this kind of authority to preaching.*

**~Wayne Grudem**

Author of Systematic Theology  
B.A. in Economics from Harvard University,  
M.Div from Westminster Theological Seminary  
Ph.D in New Testament studies from the University of Cambridge

- **Soteriology**  
(**soteria** is Greek for "salvation," **logos** is Greek for "study/word")  
**Refers to the section of Christian theology regarding the doctrine of salvation.**



# God's Glory, not mankind's, is the purpose of all things

**Romans 11:36** For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

**Colossians 1:15-20** He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

**1 Corinthians 10:31** So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**Ezekiel 36:22-23** “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. **23** I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Sovereign Lord, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes...”

**Isaiah 43:25** “I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins...”

**Ezekiel 20:44** And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake, not according to your evil ways, nor according to your corrupt deeds, O house of Israel, declares the Lord GOD.”

**Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

**Revelation 21:2** And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

## Man's depravity in sin

### Depravity:

Man's natural condition is spiritually dead apart from any grace exerted by God to restrain or transform him.

**Genesis 6:5** The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Romans 3:10-12** “None is righteous, no, not one;**11** no one understands; no one seeks for God. **12** All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

**Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

**Ephesians 2:3** among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

# Man's inability and enslaved will in sin

## Inability:

In man's natural state he can do nothing that honors God and has no will that longs for God apart from any grace exerted by God to transform him.

**Romans 8:7-8** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

**1 Corinthians 2:14** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

**John 6:44** No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

**Matthew 11:27** All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

**John 6:63** It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all...

**John 8:34** "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin..."

**Romans 14:23** For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

**Romans 6:6** We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.

**Isaiah 64:6** ...all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;

**John 8:34-36** Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. 35 The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

# Monergism: The Sovereign work of God in Salvation

## Monergism

*One proclaims a God who saves;  
One makes salvation depend on the work of God,  
One regards faith as part of God's gift of salvation,  
One gives all the glory of saving believers to God,*

vs

## Synergism

*the other speaks of a God who enables man to save himself.  
the other on a work of man;  
the other as man's own contribution to salvation;  
the other divides the praise between God, who, so to speak, built  
the machinery of salvation, and man, who by believing operated it.*

**-J. I. Packer**

## Monergism: *(God alone works salvation)*

*(mono is Greek for "one," erg is from the Greek word for "work")*

Describes the position in Christian theology of those who believe that God, through the Holy Spirit, works to effectively bring about the salvation of individuals without cooperation from the individual.

## Synergism: *(God and Man work together for salvation)*

*(syn in Greek is a prefix that means "with" erg is from the Greek word for "work")*

Describes the position in Christian theology of those who believe that God gives us spiritual life if we first choose, by a free act of our will, to exercise faith in the Gospel. Salvation is the result of a cooperation between God (starts the process by offering the Gospel), and man (who helps complete the process by choosing to place his faith in the Gospel).

## "The Order of Salvation"

1. **The Gospel Call** (the message of the gospel)
2. **Regeneration** (being born again)
3. **Conversion** (faith and repentance)

\*There are more facets to the "historical order of salvation". For the sake of our focus on Monergism tonight we will just focus on these three.

### 1. The Gospel Call (the message of the gospel)

**Matthew 28:18-20** Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **19**Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20**and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

**Romans 10:14** "How are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard?"

**Romans 10:17** So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ. (NLT)

## God's Effective Call

**Romans 8:30** And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified

### Effective calling:

Effective calling is an act of God the Father, speaking through the human proclamation of the gospel, in which he summons his people to himself in such a way that they will respond in saving faith.

**2 Thess. 2:14** "To this he called you through our gospel so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ"

**John 6:44** Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him"

**Acts 16:14** "The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul"

**1 Peter 1:23, 25** "You have been born anew not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.... That word is the good news which was preached to you"

## **2. Regeneration (being born again)**

### **Regeneration:**

Regeneration is a secret act of God in which he imparts new spiritual life to us. This is sometimes called "being born again".

**John 1:13** "were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God"

**James 1:18** Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures

**1 Peter 1:3** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead

**John 3:3-8** Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God..."

**Ezekiel 36:26** And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

## **3. Conversion (faith and repentance)**

### **Conversion:**

Conversion is our Holy Spirit empowered response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our complete trust in Jesus Christ for salvation.

**James 2:19** You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe- and shudder

### **Belief:**

a "trust" in Jesus Christ as God who took on flesh for the forgiveness of sins and our atonement unto eternal life with God

**John 1:12** "To all who received him who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God"

**John 3:16** ...whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

**God's command on all people is to "Repent" of self and sin and "Trust" (believe) in Jesus alone for Salvation.**

**Mark 1:15** "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**1 Timothy 1:14** the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

**Philippians 1:29** For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

**2 Peter 1:1** Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.

## **What about these Scriptures?**

**Ephesians 2:8-9** For by grace you have been saved through faith.

And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**John 6:40** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

**John 1:12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

**John 5:24** Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.

**Romans 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

### **Clarity about the Gospel:**

**The great news of the gospel of Jesus Christ is God saves!**

**God did this despite you and for you... not because of you.**

# The Practical Implications of Monergism

The practical implications of a monergistic view of salvation are important. Not only is it important that we hear the teaching of the scriptures and embrace how they teach us about God's Sovereignty in Salvation, but we must also see the practical implications of a monergistic view of salvation.

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts there is a diminished need for the Gospel to be "center" in our preaching and living.

1. **Monergism establishes the utter necessity and centrality of the Gospel in our entire lives, because without it, we have no hope for life.**
2. **Monergism allows us to avoid a theology of sin management which is the only logical message for those who believe we must participate in our own salvation.**

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts there is a reason to give man praise for his part.

3. **Monergism causes us to give God all the glory for our lives because we did nothing to save ourselves, and therefore can take no credit for anything good we do.**

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts there is rightly felt fear of messing up when sharing the Good news with others. This can lead to a lack of evangelism or missional living for those who feel less equipped.

4. **Monergism allows us to approach the mission of making disciples with unwavering courage and genuine confidence, because we know God is the one who saves people, not us.**
5. **Monergism produces confidence in the command to preach the Gospel from the Bible without the need to add anything else because it is God alone who persuades people's hearts of the truth of the Gospel, not our professional rhetoric.**

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts there is worry that if I mess up bad enough I can lose what I in part acquired in my salvation. If faith is in part the doing of man and not God's gift to man alone then man is capable of losing his faith.

6. **Monergism allows us to avoid the temptation to live as if we have to do something to preserve our salvation because we know our salvation was accomplished by God alone.**
7. **Monergism allows us to have confidence in our progressive growth in the Christian life, even through periods of struggle, because we know that once God has given us new life, we can't do anything to lose it.**

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts then our church will overly rely on and focus on the activities of the church growth strategies of man. This can be a weighty thing to bear & can diminish our focus on making the Gospel center in all things

8. **Monergism helps us avoid becoming overly reliant on big programs or church growth strategies because salvation is not the result of our innovative techniques but rather a result of the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit.**

If salvation is in part due to man's efforts then one can be filled with pride that causes him/her to look down on those who have not responded to God's call with a saving faith that they must produce.

9. **Monergism produces authentic humility in dealing with marginalized or unsaved people because we know that we were no different than them in our sin, and the only reason we have life is because of the sheer grace of God.**