

34. These professional sailors, capable of managing a seagoing vessel through the ravages of the worst kind of weather the seas can deliver, were unable to acquire the courage that the copacetic soul enjoys.
35. Paul encouraged them to have something to eat (v. 33ff.). They had been battling the elements for two weeks primarily without food.
36. Some biblical scholars contend that the two-week fast by the heathen mariners was not due to the constant effort required to fight the storm, but in homage and supplication to idol deities. Once the storm abated the men felt free to eat.
37. What followed was fulfillment of the prophecies Paul had expressed to all the passengers. When daylight broke they saw a bay and a beach. They made a dead run at them with the intent of beaching the ship.
38. Now a new challenge occurred “where two seas met.” A “patch of crosscurrents” drove them away from the beach into the bay where the ship wrecked as it ran aground.
39. Several events transpired as passengers struggled to disembark. The Roman soldiers were afraid the prisoners would escape so their plan was to kill them all.
40. The NET Bible provides a helpful translator’s note for:  
**Acts 27:42**      Now the soldiers’ plan was to kill the prisoners so that none of them would escape by swimming away.  
**The issue here was not cruelty, but that the soldiers would be legally responsible if any prisoners escaped and would suffer punishment themselves. So they were planning to do this as an act of self-preservation.<sup>7</sup>**
41. Paul and the others were spared by the intervention of Julius the centurion, identified in Acts 27:1 as a member of the Augustan cohort.  
**Acts 27:1**      When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius. (NET)

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<sup>7</sup> “Acts 27:42,” in *The NET Bible* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005), 2202sn20.

Julius, the centurion to whom Paul and other prisoners were delivered to be escorted to Rome (Acts 27:1), belonged to one of the five cohorts which was stationed at or near Caesarea. This “Augustus” Band was probably the same body of troops which is mentioned in inscriptions as *Cohors I Augusta*. It will be observed that all divisions of the Roman army were divided into companies of about 100 men, each of which, in the infantry, was commanded by a centurion, in the cavalry, by a decúron.<sup>8,9</sup>

42. Julius, the centurion made the decision to cancel the policy of executing the prisoners in the current circumstance and in so doing spared Paul’s life.
43. This resulted in allowing all of the 276 passengers to make it safely to land. Acts 28:1 reveals that the island they occupied is Malta.
44. This account of Paul’s insertion of divine viewpoint into the challenges that arose on the voyage to Italy clearly distinguishes the great void that separates the copacetic spiritual life from the doubts that dominate the souls of unbelievers.
45. James commands believers to pray with faith in the integrity of God in James 1:6, but supplements that with a warning against doubt which is illustrated in the saga of Paul’s voyage to Rome in Acts 27.
46. James’s example of Paul’s steadfastness undergirded by his faith in divine deliverance enabled him to remain calm while all others on board were being “tossed around by the wind.”
47. James’s mandate in James 1:6 is followed by his meteorological illustration that depicts the instability of the human soul under pressure.

**James 1:6** But he must ask [ αἰτέω (aitéō): Imperative mood #4 ] in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. (NASB)

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<sup>8</sup> “A Roman cavalry officer in command of 10 men” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, s.v. “decúron.”

<sup>9</sup> Charles H. Allen, “Army, Roman: Allusions in the New Testament to the Roman Military Establishment,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, 1:258.

1. The fourth imperative mood is the present active imperative of the verb *aitéō*, “keep on asking.” The present tense is progressive indicating that the action is an ongoing progress.
2. We observed that the choice of words associated with the imperative moods found in verses 4 and 5 suggest that believers are given permission to pray rather than being commanded to do so. Some English translations get it right, but most do not:
3. Here are the English translations of the four major editions of the Bible:
  - (1) The King James Version, v. 4: “Let patience have its perfect work: and v. 5 “let him ask of God.”
  - (2) The New International Version, v. 4: “Perseverance must finish its work” and v. 5: “he should ask God.”
  - (3) New American Standard Bible, v. 4: “let endurance have its perfect work” and v. 5: “let him ask of God.”
  - (4) New English Translation, v. 4: “let endurance have its perfect effect and v. 5: “he should ask of God.”
4. Dr. Daniel Wallace presents his analysis on this subject:

The force of the imperative is probably not a mere urging or permission, but a command, in spite of the typical English rendering. An expanded gloss is, “If anyone of you lacks wisdom, *he must ask* of God.” In other words, lacking wisdom (in the midst of trials [vv. 2–4]) does not give one the option of seeking God, but the obligation.<sup>10</sup>
5. It is at this point that the NASB gets it right with verse 6 beginning with the translation, “But he must ask.” With the present tense we expand it to read, “But he must keep on asking.”
6. The believer is then instructed to ask in faith which is the noun **πίστις** (*pístis*). It is transitive demanding an object which is the integrity of God.
7. This is followed by the phrase “without any doubting.” If one is in doubt about the integrity of God, then the confidence that is commanded is ignored by his lack of faith.

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<sup>10</sup> Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar: Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 486.

8. This is not what is required by the imperative mood that “he must act in faith of the integrity of God.”
9. Principle: Gracefully oriented in one’s petition results in grace response in provision.

### Principles:

1. If a person proposes to pray to the Father, but while doing so doubts the prayer will be answered, then he does not trust the integrity of God.
2. There are many things about which one would pray. How about this current example? It is not documented that anyone other than Paul prayed.
3. They were all heathen and as such they were at the mercy of their nautical experience and their inventory of ideas on how to endure hurricane force winds and waves.
4. Otherwise, passengers had no innate confidence they would survive the storm: “Since neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm was assailing us, from then on all hope of our being saved was gradually abandoned” (Acts 27:20 [NASB]).
5. The idea of divine deliverance was considered, but circumstances of various kinds caused fear which led to distrust and ultimately to doubt Paul’s prayer would be answered.
6. Things were just fine until, while sailing westward along the south coast of Crete, the first winds of an approaching hurricane, called Euráquilo, arrived.

The east or northeast wind which drove Paul’s ship to shipwreck at Méliita [Malta] (Acts 27:14). The term seems to have been the sailor’s term for that particular wind, and Paul uses the word which was used by them on this occasion.<sup>11</sup>

7. This wind system is identified as a hurricane, Beaufort wind-force 12, which generates waves with forty-five-foot crests and winds of at least 74 miles per hour. *The NET Bible’s* translator’s note for Acts 27:14 confirms this translation:

**End JAS1-10. See JAS1-11 for continuation of study at p. 101.)**

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<sup>11</sup> Alfred H. Joy, “Euraquilo,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, gen. ed. James Orr (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956), 2:1039.