

Believe and you shall be saved.

Have you watched something happening in nature, like a tremendous storm brewing until it explodes right over your head with shock waves of thunder and lightning forking across the sky like strobe lights? It is something both awesome and terrifying to watch all at the same time. John 3:16 is a much-loved verse in the Christian world. Here, too, the wonder and the horror of it combine. God gave us His son to be lifted up high on a gruesome cross, to both die and to be our salvation. Once, the Israelites had to look at the serpent on the pole and they would live. We, too, have been bitten by the serpent, poisoned by sin, and without Jesus to look to, death will have its way. This verse calls us to believe what God had done for us through Jesus. Paul makes it clear to the Ephesians; that we shall no longer be enslaved to sin and death. God did this freely so we could be saved from the corruption sin brings.

And everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live

But God made us alive together with Christ.

The term “being saved” is a bit ambiguous. Both John and Paul talk about God saving us. But how do we know that we are saved? How do we have that assurance in our hearts that this everlasting life is within us. Many of us do not have euphoric feelings of God’s grace overwhelming our emotions. What we do have, is a compulsion in our souls to shun the things that would oppress ourselves and others, to shun that darkness that harbours hurt and hatred. Our desire rises, to want to honour God with our lives, seeking His ways that bring the light of healing and empathy and love. So it is that as we focus our gaze on Jesus, God’s tangible mission to all of humanity upon the cross. Keeping our sight on what He has done for us and how He is daily transforming us, we live because He now lives in us. We come to know, that we know ever so deeply within our souls, that we are the work of His hands and in this is His salvation that brings us into an eternity of life.