

Finished

Zero hour approaches. All Woodard can hear is his heart pounding and the watch ticking that will decide the moment for the devastating blast.

'Five minutes to go.' The authoritative voice of Brigadier-General Lambert breaks the silence. 'One minute to go' calls Lambert. Woodward's hand moves into position on the exploder. The silence is deafening.

'Ten seconds, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, fire!' Down goes the firing switch. At first, nothing. Then, from deep down within the earth, there comes a low rumble, then a violent earth tremor and it is as if the world is splitting apart. Suddenly, the earth bursts open throwing sheets of dark muddy clay, planking huge lumps of dirt the size of hay bales, bodies of men cart wheeling through the air, weapons, all shot skyward. Out of the top, bursts a sheet of red flame.

Nineteen massive mines shatter the Messines Ridge in Belgium. Ten thousand German soldiers die in the explosions that smashed open the German frontline. It was the largest man-made explosion in history up until that time [adapted from "Beneath Hill 60"].

Imagine the tension on another hill just outside Jerusalem. Suddenly, as the soldiers hoist the last prisoner into the sky, letting the cross fall into its hole at midday, a dense darkness envelops the whole scene. A dreadful eerie silence follows. Over the next three hours the silence is broken by one lone voice.

"I thirst." Then towards the end of the third hour, with a voice like thunder Jesus cries out: *"Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?"*— which means, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* *"It is finished."* *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."*

Instantly, the whole earth heaves under an earthquake. Graves are split open. Some saints are resurrected. The curtain of the temple is torn in two from top to bottom. The darkness is replaced by afternoon sunlight. *"When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry and saw how he died, he said, 'Surely this man was the Son of God!'"* Mark 15:39

The commitment of Jesus to the task of liberating mankind from the kingdom of darkness, from Satan, from sin, was a far more daring undertaking than what those miners and engineers achieved on 7th June 1917 at Hill 60. The repercussions of Jesus' victory reverberate around the earth and into heaven itself.

Jesus "entered the Most Holy Place, once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption . . . Christ entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence . . . he has appeared . . . to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself . . . when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God" Hebrews 9:12, 24, 26; 10:12

The ear-piercing cry: **"It is Finished"** is the message of Easter. On the basis of that one sacrifice, God can forgive your sin. Has he? *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"* 1 John 1:9