

Just as well I'm not here November 2018; some wouldn't have liked what I would say about the end of WW1: the purposeful and deliberate humiliation, ruin and punishment of the "enemy" (fuelling, without doubt, the rise of the Nazis and WW2), demonstrating how little understood had been the Good News of Jesus the Christ. However, before we leave the subject of pathetically primitive and bankrupt empirical thinking, I want to point to a centenary that will get little attention this year: Allenby's **non**-triumphal entry into Jerusalem after his defeat of the Turkish Army. (Although at the beginning of December, the actual defeat of the Turks was during the engagement 10-14 November. In any case, December has another focus!)

Edmund Allenby was not a general for whom staff officers ever developed warm feelings; he was known as The Bull because of his sudden rages. He came across as remote, emotionless, cold. (Irrespective of explosive outbursts!) Yet he was a proven soldier: at the time of his command in Egypt/Palestine he had already served in the Boer War and on the Western Front. Indeed, his impressive grasp of logistics, tactics, medical support and the morale of the troops, gained him a comprehensive success in both capturing Jerusalem from the Turks, and subsequently adding diplomacy to his skill sets in sensitively governing the Holy City - even under martial law.

Although he was to rise still further to Field Marshall, I think his greatest moment was when he laid all his accomplishments to one side in that single act of humility, when he dismounted and with his entourage entered Jerusalem on foot. The citizens - Jews, Muslims, Christians, all alike - did not miss the point. (Unlike the Kaiser, who had ridden into Jerusalem as a conqueror almost 20 years earlier.) Allenby's declaration of martial law included such sentiments as, "...it is my desire that every person pursue his lawful business without fear of interruption..." and that all holy sites or places of worship would be, "...maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred."

So, where's the God bit? St Peter, sharing what he had learnt from Jesus, wrote, "...all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for [an OT quote] 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time."

Allenby was feted in his day by society for his earthly achievements. However, I suspect God commends Allenby for knowing what St Peter/Jesus was talking about. And acting upon it.