

On Worshipping, Adoring, and Bowing Down

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Meanings of the Latin words *adorate* and *colatis*

An English dictionary lists the several meanings of the words "adore" and "adoration":

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1956:

"a-dore: 1. To worship with profound reverence. 2. To address with exalted thoughts, by prayer and thanksgiving. 3. To pay divine honors to; to honor as a god, or as divine. 4. To love in the highest degree, as a man a woman. 5. To regard with the utmost esteem, affection, and respect.

"ad-o-ra'-tion: 1. The act of paying honors to a divine being; the worship paid to God; the act of addressing as a god. Adoration consists in external homage, accompanied by the highest reverence. It is used for the act of praying, or preferring requests or thanksgiving to the Supreme Being. 2. Homage paid to one in high esteem; profound reverence. 3. A mode by which the cardinals in conclave sometimes elect the pope. In adoration, unlike scrutiny, the cardinals elect a pope by acclamation. 4. In art, a pictorial representation of the adoration of the infant Jesus by the magi and the shepherds."¹

Hence the Latin word *adorate*, as well as the word *colatis*, has several meanings:

Latin Dictionary: "**Adorate.** honor, adore, worship, pay homage, reverence; beg, plead with, appeal to."

Latin Dictionary: "**Colatis.** honor, cherish, worship; tend, take care of; adorn, dress, decorate, embellish."

When the Latin words *adorate* or *colatis* mean veneration or honor, they can apply not only to God but also to creatures, as God must always be venerated and honored but certain creatures can also be venerated and honored, such as good secular or religious rulers, saints, and holy objects (the Holy Cross, relics of the saints, etc.).

¹ *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, based upon the broad foundations laid down by Noah Webster. Revised by the Publisher's Editorial Staff under the supervision of Harold Whitehall, Ph.D., Indiana University. Standard Reference Works Publishing Company, Inc., New York, 1956.

However, if the Latin words *adorate* or *colatis* mean worship, then they can only apply to God because worship is the highest form of adoration, veneration, and honor and is given only to God. Hence it is idolatry to worship anything other than the one true God.

Worship is the highest form of adoration, veneration, and honor and thus is given only to God

Worship, then, is the highest form of adoration, veneration, and honor and thus must be directed only to the one true God. If worship is directed to a false god, false gods, the devil, idols, or anything else other than the one true God, it is idolatry:

“The Lord your God, ...him shall you fear, and him shall you worship, and to him shall you sacrifice.” (4 Ki. 17:36)

“I am the Lord your God. You shall not make to yourselves any idol or graven thing, neither shall you erect pillars, nor set up a remarkable stone in your land to worship it: for I am the Lord your God.” (Lev. 26:1)

“Turn not away from them, neither to the right hand nor to the left, nor follow strange gods nor worship them.” (Deut. 28:14)

“And yet you have forsaken me, and have worshipped strange gods: therefore I will deliver you no more.” (Jdg. 10:13)

“But as often as beside their own God they worshipped any other, they were given to spoil and to the sword and to reproach.” (Judi. 5:18)

“I do not worship idols made with hands, but the living God that created heaven and earth and hath power over all flesh.” (Dan. 14:4)

“But I feared lest I should transfer the honour of my God to a man, and lest I should worship any one except my God.” (Est. 13:14)

Adoration is given not only to God but also to some creatures

However, when the Latin word *adorate* means adore, venerate, or honor, it is directed not only to God but can also be directed to creatures. But when it is directed to creatures, it is a lesser adoration, lesser veneration, lesser honor than the adoration, veneration, or honor given to God. For example,

Saul adored Samuel: “And Saul understood that it was Samuel, and he bowed himself with his face to the ground and adored him.” (1 Ki. 28:14)

Gentiles shall adore the Kings of Israel: “And the Gentiles shall leave their idols, and shall come into Jerusalem, and shall dwell in it. And all the kings of the earth shall rejoice in it, adoring the King of Israel.” (Tob. 14:8-9)

Abigail adored David: “When Abigail saw David, she made haste and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and adored upon the ground.” (1 Ki. 15:23)

Joab adored David: “And Joab, falling down to the ground upon his face, adored and blessed the king. And Joab said: This day thy servant hath understood that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king: for thou hast fulfilled the request of thy servant.” (2 Ki. 14:22)

Apostate Jews will adore good Catholics: “Behold, I will bring of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not but do lie. Behold, I will make them to

come and adore before thy [the church in Philadelphia's] feet. And they shall know that I have loved thee." (Apoc. 3:9)

When the word "adore" is used in relation to God, it is understood to mean the highest form of adoration (worship) even though the word "worship" is not used. For example,

"The Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall you fear, and him shall you adore, and to him shall you sacrifice." (4 Ki. 17:36)

"And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God; and all the people answered, Amen, amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed down and adored God with their faces to the ground." (2 Esd. 8:6)

"And when they had adored God and given him thanks, they sat down together." (Tob. 11:12)

"Exalt ye the Lord our God and adore his footstool, for it is holy." (Ps. 98:5)

"Then all the people together made haste and fell down to the earth upon their faces to adore the Lord their God and to pray to the Almighty God the most High." (Eccus. 50:19)

False gods, devils, and idols must not be worshipped nor adored

However, false gods, devils, and idols must not be worshipped nor even adored (venerated) in any way:

"Adore not any strange god. The Lord his name is Jealous, he is a jealous God." (Ex. 34:14)

"But if you and your children revolting shall turn away from following me, and will not keep my commandments and my ceremonies which I have set before you, but will go and worship strange gods and adore them: I will take away Israel from the face of the land which I have given them. And the temple which I have sanctified to my name I will cast out of my sight, and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword among all people." (3 Ki. 9:6-7)

"You shall not fear strange gods, nor shall you adore them, nor worship them, nor sacrifice to them." (4 Ki. 17:35)

"There shall be no new god in thee: neither shalt thou adore a strange god." (Ps. 80:10)

In the same way, Catholics are forbidden to adore, venerate, honor, or even respect false religions. They must hate false religions even though at times they must tolerate them.

Beware of heretical English translations of the Latin words *adorate* and *colatis*

Hence when the Clementine Vulgate and other Latin Bibles use the Latin words *adorate* or *colatis*, the English translation of the words must be based upon the context of the passage so as to avoid any idolatrous, heretical, or otherwise erroneous translation. Take the following examples.

Challoner's idolatrous translation of Josue 5:15 has men worshipping angels

In the Challoner Bible², the English mistranslation of the Latin word *adorans* to mean worshipping in Josue 5:15 is idolatrous because it has God condoning the worship of a creature, in this case St. Michael the Archangel:

Clementine Vulgate: “Cecidit Iosue pronus in terram et adorans ait quid dominus meus loquitur ad servum suum.” (Jos. 5:15)

Challoner's mistranslation of CV: “(Ver. 14) And he answered: No, but I am prince of the host of the Lord [St. Michael the Archangel] and now I am come. (Ver. 15) Josue fell on his face to the ground, and worshipping, said: What saith my lord to his servant?” (Jos. 5:15)

To not be idolatrous, the translation of the Clementine Vulgate should say “adoring” and not “worshipping.” Even though the original Douay-Rheims text and commentary contain heresies and other errors, its text and commentary on Josue 5:15 are not idolatrous because the Latin word *adorans* is correctly translated to mean adoring and thus not worshipping:

Original Douay-Rheims: “Josue fell flat on the ground. And adoring, he said: What speaketh my Lord to his servant?” (Jos. 5:15)

The following is a commentary from the Douay-Rheims Bible on Josue 5:15 regarding the use of the word “adoring”:

Douay-Rheims Commentary on Jos. 5: “Ver. 15. **Adoring**. Josue, knowing that the person which appeared was an angel and not God nor a man, neither adored him with godly honor, for that had been idolatry, nor with civil, for that pertaineth to worldly and temporal excellency and is not competent to sacred things, especially to immortal and glorious spirits; and therefore the honor he did to this angel was religious honor infinitely inferior to divine, and yet much greater than civil.”

However, the Septuagint, as well as the Masoretic, does not contain the word “adore”:

Septuagint: “And Joshua fell on his face upon the earth, and said to him: My lord, what commandest thou thy servant?” (Jos. 5:15)

Masoretic: “And he said: ‘Nay, but I am captain of the host of the Lord; I am now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said unto him: ‘What saith my lord unto his servant?’ ”

Challoner's idolatrous translation of Genesis 27:29 has men worshipping men

The Challoner Bible's English mistranslation of the Latin word *adorate* to mean worship in Genesis 27:29 is idolatrous because it has God condoning worship given to a creature, in this case Jacob:

Clementine Vulgate: “Et serviant tibi populi et adorent te tribus...” (Gen. 27:29)

Challoner translation: “And let peoples serve thee [Jacob], and tribes worship thee...” (Gen. 27:29)

To not be idolatrous, the translation of the Clementine Vulgate should say “and tribes adore thee.” However, the Septuagint, as well as the Masoretic, uses the words “bow down”:

Septuagint: “And let nations serve thee, and princes bow down to thee...”

Masoretic: “Let peoples serve thee, and nations bow down to thee...”

² *Challoner Bible*, revised by apostate Bishop Richard Challoner, 1749-1752. Translated from the Latin Vulgate.

What follows are other idolatrous verses in the Challoner Bible that have God condoning the worship of angels or human beings:

(Gen. 19:1) (Gen. 27:29) (Gen. 37:9) (Gen. 37:1) (Gen. 50:18) (Ex. 18:7) (Num. 22:31) (Jos. 5:15) (Ruth 2:10) (1 Ki. 24:9) (2 Ki. 9:6) (2 Ki. 14:4) (2 Ki. 24:21) (3 Ki. 1:16, 23, 31, 53) (4 Ki. 2:15) (4 Ki. 4:37) (1 Par. 29:20) (2 Par. 24:17) (Tob. 13:11-14) (Est. 3:2, 5) (Est. 8:17) (Est. 13:12) (Est. 16:11) (Isa. 49:23) (Isa. 60:14) (Dan. 2:46)

Challoner's idolatrous translation allows men to worship Mary and saints

Challoner's idolatrous translation of the Latin word *adorate* to mean worship when it should mean adore or honor or reverence is made even worse by his commentary on Josue 5:15:

Challoner Commentary on Jos. 5: "Ver. 15. **Worshipping.** Not with divine honour, but with a religious veneration of an inferior kind, suitable to the dignity of his person."

Hence, in order to defend his heretical translation, Challoner gives an illogical and idolatrous definition to the word "worship" to mean that it can also be directed to creatures and thus not only to God. The natural law tells all men that worship is directed only to the highest being or to what one believes is the highest being or beings, as testified to in the pagan religions in which they worship a false god or gods but not beings that they believe are not supreme.

Challoner's idolatrous text and lying commentary, and others like them, went uncondemned and thus opened the door for the idolatry of worshipping the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints, which some nominal Catholics do by worshipping Mary in their hearts (or at least by their words) instead of worshipping God only.

This is not only a supreme offense against God but also a most grievous offense against Mary and the saints because they would never conceive of being worshipped since they know very well that only God is to be worshipped. Those who worship Mary or a saint turn Mary or that saint into Lucifer, who wanted to be equal to or even above God. In fact, there are some sects that have gone so far as to teach that Mary is the fourth person of the Holy Trinity.

Even so-called Catholics who say that they worship Mary but mean a lesser worship than the worship given to God are guilty for scandalizing the Catholic faith and thus the Catholic Church in the eyes of others who know very well what the word worship means and thus believe that Catholics actually do worship Mary on an equal plane with God. And they also show themselves to be hypocrites and liars for trying to explain away the real meaning of the word worship to justify their false devotion to Mary and the saints. In essence (in their hearts or in their words) they have taken the word worship, which only applies to God, and applied it to others.

Although the Catholic Church teaches that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the most adored, venerated, and honored of all creatures, this is a lesser adoration, veneration, and honor than is given to God and thus is not worship. The Catholic Church correctly lists three kinds of religious adoration, veneration, and honor: 1) that which is given to God, which is called *latria*; 2) that which is given to the saints, which is called *dulia*; and 3) that which is given to Mary, which is called *hyper-dulia*. Even though the 1917 Code of Canon Law is invalid and heretical, it teaches the truth in this regard:

Invalid and heretical *1917 Code of Canon Law*: "Canon 1255. To the blessed Trinity and to each of the three Persons, and to Christ our Lord also under the sacramental species, is due the cult of *latria*; to the blessed Virgin Mary, the cult of *hyperdulia*; to the other saints reigning with Christ in heaven, the cult of *dulia*."

When the worship of Mary and saints in hearts or words began

From the information I have, the idolatry of using the word “worship” instead of adore, venerate, or honor for creatures began in the 18th century with the Challoner Bible, the most influential English Bible used by Catholics, which was published between 1749 and 1752. To my knowledge, it was the first English Bible to mistranslate the Latin word *adorate* (which it did at least thirty times) to mean worship when applied to creatures when it should have used adore, venerate, reverence, or honor.³ Whereas, the original Douay-Rheims Bible, of which the New Testament was completed at Rheims in 1582 and the Old Testament was completed at Douay in 1609, correctly used the word “adore” instead of worship in these instances.

Following the lead of the Challoner Bible, other Bibles mistranslated *adorate* to mean worship when directed to creatures, such as the Haydock Bible (1859) and the Confraternity Bible (1961). However, more recent Bibles correctly translate *adorate* to mean adore or venerate, such as the New American Bible (1995).

The words “divine” and “sacred” can be used for God or for godly or holy things

Use of the word “divine” for God and creatures

The word “divine” has several meanings:

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1956: “**di-vine**: 1. Of, relating to, or characteristic of God, or any god, goddess, or deity; as, a divine being; a divine nature. 2. Appropriated to God or celebrating his praise; as, divine songs; divine worship. 3. Godlike; heavenly; excellent in the highest degree; extraordinary. A *divine* sentence is in the lips of the king. —Prov. xvi. 10. 5. Relating to divinity or theology. 6. Divining; augural. [Obs.]

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1956: “**di-vine**, n: 1. A man skilled in divinity; a theologian; as, a great *divine*. 2. A minister of the gospel; a clergyman.”

When the word divine is used for God, it means God himself. Hence the words “divine Father” mean “God the Father.” When the word divine is used for creatures, it means godly. Hence the words “divine Peter” mean “godly Peter” or “Peter the godly.” If a creature is very godly, he can be called “most divine” (most like God, but not God).

For example, St. Hippolytus called the apostle St. John “John the Divine”:

St. Hippolytus, *The Antichrist*, 3rd century: “XXI. ...His first advent had John the Baptist as its forerunner; and his second, in which he is to come in glory, will exhibit Enoch, and Elias, and John the Divine.”

St. Cyril of Alexandria and Pope St. Leo the Great called St. Peter “divine”:

St. Cyril of Alexandria, 5th Century, *Commentary on Isaias*: “When he wisely and blamelessly confessed his faith to Jesus saying, ‘You are Christ, Son of the living God,’ Jesus said to divine Peter: ‘You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church.’ ”

Pope St. Leo the Great, 5th Century, *On the Transfiguration*: “The divine Peter, by the revelation of the Heavenly Father, overcoming corporeal things, and transcending things human, beheld the Son of the Living God, and confessed the glory of the Deity.”

³ See RJMI book *Clementine Vulgate’s Heresies and Other Errors*: Heretical or Otherwise Erroneous Texts Not Based on the Clementine Vulgate: The idolatry of worshipping angels and men.

Theodoret, quoted by Apostate Antipope Benedict XIV, calls the apostles St. John and St. Peter “divine”:

Apostate Antipope Benedict XIV, *On Heroic Virtue*, 18th century: “Theodoret, on the words of the Apostle: ‘To one indeed, by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom,’ thus speaks ‘He calls the word of wisdom not eloquence, but true doctrine, of which the divine Apostle had received the grace, and the divine John the Evangelist, and the divine Peter, chief of the Apostles, and blessed Stephen, the first martyr. For these men who were fisherman, earning their bread by manual labour, and utterly unlearned, could not have preached and written, and, with the greatest effort, accomplished what they said and wrote, unless they had received true wisdom from the Divine Spirit.’ ”

Theodoret of Cyrus, *The Unconfounded*, 5th century: “*Orth.*—But it was after the Passion and the Resurrection that the divine Apostle wrote the Epistle to Timothy wherein he speaks of the Saviour Christ as man... And after the Passion and the Resurrection the divine Peter, in his address to the Jews, called him man.”

St. Athanasius called the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Paul “divine”:

St. Athanasius, 4th Century, *Commentary on Luke 1*:

Latin: “Quanti aestimanda est gloria sanctae Virginis ac divinae Mariae, quae Verbi mater secundum carnis ortum est et vocatur...”

English: “What would be the glory of the holy virgin and divine Mary, in that she became and is called the Mother of the Word.”

St. Athanasius, 4th Century, *Discourse 4 Against the Arians*: “14. And this the divine Apostle knows, when he writes to the Corinthians, ‘Be not straitened in us, but be yourselves dilated, O Corinthians’ for he advises identical persons to change from straitness to dilatation.”

And the Anglicans refer to their theologians as “divines,” in this case meaning “teacher of divine things”:

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1956: “**di-vine**, n. 1. A man skilled in divinity; a theologian; as, a great *divine*. 2. A minister of the gospel; a clergyman.”

Divine can also mean the gift of foretelling the future or revealing some other secret or hidden thing:

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1956: “**di-vine**,...5. Divining; augural. [Obs.]”

However, when the word “divine” is used for creatures, it is idolatry when the word means God or a god, such as when a pagan Roman Emperor who believed he was a god was called divine.

Certain holy things are also called divine (godly). For example, the Bible refers to the covenant, God’s faithful children, incense offered to God, and religious services as “divine”:

“My son, let not evil counsel, who hath forsaken the discipline of youth and hath forgotten the divine covenant, take hold of thee.” (Prv. 2:17- Septuagint)

“By a voice he saith: Hear me, ye divine offspring, and bud forth as the rose planted by the brooks of waters.” (Eccus. 39:17 – Septuagint)

“He poured out at the foot of the altar a divine odour to the most high Prince.” (Eccus. 50:17)

“The former indeed had also justifications of divine service and a worldly sanctuary.” (Heb. 9:1)

Hence the Catholic Church refers to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass as the “divine liturgy”:

Pope St. Leo the Great, *Sermon 45*, 5th century: “So that the divine liturgy of the Paschal Mysteries might be performed with worthy solemnity, the two things in which the teaching of all the commandments concurs must be more earnestly sought, in which each separate believer is made both the sacrifice to God and his temple.”

Use of the word “sacred” for God and creatures

The word “sacred” has several meanings:

Merriam-Webster Dictionary: “**sacred**. 1a: dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity, *a tree sacred to the gods*; b: devoted exclusively to one service or use (as of a person or purpose) *a fund sacred to charity*. 2a: worthy of religious veneration: holy; b: entitled to reverence and respect. 3: of or relating to religion: not secular or profane: *sacred music*... 5a: unassailable, inviolable; b: highly valued and important: *a sacred responsibility*.”

When the words “sacred” or “most sacred” are used for God, they mean the holiest of all things, as only God is. When the word “sacred” is used for creatures, it means holy. And when the phrase “most sacred” is used for creatures, it means the holiest a creature could be.

For example, the Council of Chalcedon referred to Pope St. Leo the Great, Anatolius the archbishop, and other bishops as “most sacred”:

Council of Chalcedon, 451, First Session, Proceedings: “3. There also assembled the holy and ecumenical council convoked in the city of Chalcedon by divine decree, that is: Paschasinus and Lucentius the most devout bishops and Boniface the most devout presbyter, representing the most sacred and God-beloved Archbishop Leo of Senior Rome, Anatolius the most sacred archbishop of the renowned city of Constantinople New Rome, Dioscorus the most God-beloved archbishop of the great city of Alexandria, and the other most sacred and devout bishops...”

Pope St. Gregory the Great called St. Peter’s dead body “the most sacred body of the blessed apostle Peter”:

Pope St. Gregory the Great, *Letter to Peter, Subdeacon*, 6th century: “...But let thy Experience see to the advantage of Holy Church, remembering that thou hast before the most sacred body of the blessed apostle Peter received power over his patrimony.”⁴

Some holy objects are also referred to as sacred; such as vestments, the Temple, a church, odors, feast days, and relics:

“And I have put wisdom in the heart of every skillful man, that they may make all things which I have commanded thee..., the holy vestments in the ministry for Aaron the priest, and for his sons, that they may execute their office about the sacred things.” (Ex. 31:6, 10)

“They made also the plate of sacred veneration of the purest gold, and they wrote on it with the engraving of a lapidary, The Holy of the Lord...” (Ex. 39:29)

“But if he have no uncles by the father, the inheritance shall be given to them that are the next akin. And this shall be to the children of Israel sacred by a perpetual law, as the Lord hath commanded Moses.” (Num. 27:11)

“And Joshua, the son of Nun, went in to the priests and spoke to them, saying, And let seven priests having seven sacred trumpets proceed thus before the Lord, and let

⁴ b. 1, ep. 57.

them sound loudly; and let the ark of the covenant of the Lord follow.” (Jos. 6:6-7 – Septuagint)

“Thus they that persecuted the cause for the city, and for the people, and the sacred vessels, did soon suffer unjust punishment.” (2 Mac. 4:48)

“And when the Lord shall have brought thee into the land...that floweth with milk and honey, thou shalt celebrate this manner of sacred rites in this month.” (Ex. 13:5)

First Council of Nicea, 325: “We further proclaim to you the good news of the agreement concerning the holy Easter, that this particular also has through your prayers been rightly settled; so that all our brethren in the East who formerly followed the custom of the Jews are henceforth to celebrate the said most sacred feast of Easter at the same time with the Romans and yourselves and all those who have observed Easter from the beginning.”

However, it is not prudent nowadays to use the words “adore,” “divine,” or “sacred” for creatures

Because in these days almost all men believe that the words “adore,” “sacred,” and “divine” only apply to God, it is not prudent for a Catholic to use these words in relation to angels or humans because of the misunderstanding and thus scandal it would cause. For example, it is not prudent to say “divine Mary” or “we adore Mary” or “sacred Mary” because most people would believe it means that Mary is God and not simply that Mary is godly or venerated as a creature or holy.

However, the words “adore” and “sacred” can be used in relation to certain objects that redound to God’s glory, such as sacred vestments, sacred altars, and the divine liturgy.

Another example of a word that has changed its meaning over time is the word “gay.” Up until recently, the word “gay” meant happy:

Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary, 1956: “**gay**, a: 1. Merry, airy; jovial; sportive; frolicsome. It denotes more life and animation than cheerful. Belinda smiled, and all the world was *gay*. 2. Fine; showy; as, a gay dress. 3. Inflamed or merry with liquor; intoxicated; dissipated. [Colloq.]. **Syn.** —Merry, lively, blithe, sprightly, sportive, hilarious.”

However, for most people in these days, the word “gay” means a homosexual:

Google Dictionary: “Gay: 1. (of a person) homosexual (used especially of a man)—‘the city’s gay and lesbian people.’ 2. relating to or used by homosexuals—‘a gay bar.’ 3. DATED: lighthearted and carefree—‘Nan had a gay disposition and a very pretty face.’ ”

Hence it is not prudent to say that “Moses was gay,” meaning happy, because most people would believe it means homosexual and thus that Moses was a homosexual.

To bow down before a person is an act of obeisance

To bow down before a person is an act of obeisance (of submission) to that person, such as to a father or to a secular or religious ruler. Bowing down before someone can be accompanied by worship or adoration or neither.

Bowing is accompanied by adoration when the person bowing adores (venerates) the person he bows before. For example,

Abigail bowed before David: “When Abigail saw David, she made haste and lighted off the ass and fell before David, on her face, and adored upon the ground.” (1 Ki. 15:23)

Joab bowed before David: “And Joab, falling down to the ground upon his face, adored and blessed the king; and Joab said: This day thy servant hath understood that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king; for thou hast fulfilled the request of thy servant.” (2 Ki. 14:22)

The Wise Men bowed before the infant Jesus: “And entering into the house, they [the Wise Men] found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him...” (Mt. 2:11)

Bowing is accompanied by worship when the person bowing worships the being or beings he bows before. For example,

Esdras and the people bowed before God: “And Esdras blessed the Lord the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, amen, lifting up their hands; and they bowed down and worshipped God with their faces to the ground.” (2 Esd. 8:6)

And pagans bow down before and worship false gods, idols, or devils.

Bowing is accompanied by neither adoration nor worship when the person bowing does not venerate the person he bows before and thus bows only as an act of obeisance. For example,

Abraham bowed before the people of Heth: “Abraham rose up, and bowed down to the people of the land, to wit the children of Heth...” (Gen. 23:7)

Jacob bowed before Esau: “And he [Jacob] went forward and bowed down with his face to the ground seven times until his brother [Esau] came near.” (Gen. 33:3)

Judith bowed before Holofernes: “And Judith seeing Holofernes sitting under a canopy, which was woven of purple and gold, with emeralds and precious stones, after she had looked on his face bowed down to him, prostrating herself to the ground. And the servants of Holofernes lifted her up by the command of their master.” (Judi. 10:19-20)

At times some of God’s chosen people bowed down before an angel thinking him to be God and were corrected by the angel who told them that he is not God but to worship God only. For example, on two occasions the apostle St. John bowed before an angel thinking the angel to be God:

“And I fell down before his feet to worship him. And he saith to me: See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God.” (Apoc. 19:10)

“And I, John, who have heard and seen these things. And after I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who shewed me these things. And he said to me: See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant and of thy brethren the prophets and of them that keep the words of the prophecy of this book. Worship God.” (Apoc. 22:8-9)

Catholic Commentary on Apoc. 10:10: “**I fell down before his feet:** St. Augustine (lib. 20, contra Faust, c. 21) teaches that this angel appeared in so glorious a manner that St. John took him to be God and therefore would have given him divine honour had not the angel stopped him by telling him he was but his fellow servant.”

At other times God’s chosen people were allowed to bow down before an angel because they knew he was not God and thus gave him a lesser adoration, veneration, honor, or obeisance than that which is given to God. For example, Tobias and his son were allowed to bow down before

St. Raphael the Archangel because they knew he was not God and thus gave him a lesser veneration and obeisance than that which is given to God:

“For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven, who stand before the Lord. And when they had heard these things, they were troubled, and being seized with fear they fell upon the ground on their face. And the angel said to them: Peace be to you, fear not.” (Tob. 12:15-17)

Another example is when Josue was allowed to bow down before an angel (St. Michael the Archangel) and adore him because Josue knew he was an angel and thus gave him a lesser adoration and obeisance than that which is given to God. See in this article [Challoner’s idolatrous translation of Josue 5:15 has men worshipping angels](#), p. 4.

And as was already shown in this section, God allows and at times commands his chosen people to bow down before certain men as an act of obeisance.

And, lastly, one can adore, venerate, or honor someone while not being in submission to them, such as when a pope adores, venerates, or honors a lesser subject.

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, St. Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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