

# Oedipus Rex – a Christ Figure

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## Oedipus Rex – a Christ Figure

Sophocles' famous tragedy, Oedipus Rex, perhaps "the most important and influential drama ever written" ("Sophocles" 717), presents in the person of Oedipus the model of a good ruler, a humanely intelligent and vigorously active leader, a man who earlier saved his adopted city Thebes from disaster. Is Oedipus an alter Christus besides?

The numerous parallels between the [figure](#) of the king Oedipus and the figure of [Christ](#) in the Scriptures prompts the reader to ask the above question.

For example, in the opening lines of the drama, Oedipus greets the crowd of suppliants (including old men, boys and children) waiting at his palace doors with the words: "My children, latest born to Cadmus old, /Why sit ye here as suppliants, in your hands /Branches of olive filleted with wool"? Later, the king's second address to the crowd begins: "Ah! my poor children, known, ah, known too well,/The quest that brings you hither and your need." Other addresses to the people on the part of the king refer to them as "children." There are many parallels to this in the Bible when Jesus addressed the people. In the gospel of Matthew alone, the word children is used 20 times, for example 3:9: ". .

.and do not presume to say to yourselves, `We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham." Jesus also said in Matthew 18:3: "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven." In the same book (23:37) Jesus said, "O [Jerusalem](#), Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her b...

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...says "I thank my God through Jesus Christ," thus associating the two very closely.

Thus it is seen that there are many parallels between Sophocles' drama, Oedipus Rex, in its treatment of the king, and the Bible with its treatment of Jesus, even though the latter was written some 400 years later than the former.

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