

Week Five Drobox Assignment: Blindness

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Although Oedipus the King was written by a secular Greek poet, I believe it perspires the Biblical truth that man is dead to the knowledge of his true spiritual self, and thus, blinded from the truth known only to the Spiritually alive. That truth is that he is alienated from the life of God through union with the first sinner, Adam. Spiritual death and blindness are in a permanent marriage relationship. Therefore, where one is present, the other is united in unholy matrimony. This paper shall briefly address the motif of blindness in this Greek tragedy. This student will also discuss subjects such as what is physical and figurative blindness, and how do we know. How is it that someone so sure of himself can be so utterly wrong about that for which he has confidence. Oedipus was blinded from the truth about himself, and in that blindness, he was deceived. What is physical blindness?

Physical blindness is defined as unable to see because of injury, disease, or a congenital condition.¹ This type of blindness affects the human body in this world of time and space. Human beings know that when a person is physically blind, he or she is unable to see material things. Living mammals are at a distinct disadvantage when they lack physical sight because they are cut off from visually perceiving their world. They are unable to receive the information that light brings and must be led by another to get from place to place. Please consider the blind prophet of Apollo, Teiresias, and how he enters the scene being led by a little boy. The text states: Enter Teiresias, blind, and guided by a boy². The physically blind must utilize the eyes of another when attempting to navigate their world in their darkness. The physically blind are unable to cure themselves, for if they were able, they would no longer be physically blind. Only God, even the Lord Jesus Christ, can cure physical blindness in this world or the world to come.

1 Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, eds., *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

2 Sophocles, "Oedipus the King," in *The Harvard Classics 8: Nine Greek Dramas*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909), 206.

The gods were not pleased to heal the physical blindness of Teiresias, but yet he had advanced sight as it related to knowing things.

Figurative blindness has the same characteristics that physical blindness has but is not literally true. Using a figure is expressing one thing in terms usually denoting another with which it may be regarded as analogous or METAPHORICAL (*figurative language*)³. Teiresias was physically blind, but Oedipus was figuratively blind. Here in the real world of time and space, this student and others may choose the latter but, that is not so in the context of the story Oedipus in the Thebesian universe. In this story, it is better to be physically blind than to be figuratively blind. Hear the words of Teiresias to Oedipus:

“And this I say since thou hast dared revile
my blindness, that thou seest, yet dost does not see
thy evil plight, nor where thou livest, nor yet
with whom thou dwellest. Know’ st thou even this,
whence thou art sprung? All ignorant thou sinnest
against thine own, the living and the dead.
And soon a curse from mother and from sire
with fearful foot shall chase thee forth from us,
now seeing all things bright, then all things dark.”⁴

Oedipus was figuratively blind to who his biological parents were. If he had known this, he would have never killed his father and sired children with and married his mother. King Swollen Foot was cut off from that information, in the same way, a person that is physically

3 Inc Merriam-Webster, *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*. (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

4 Sophocles, “Oedipus the King,” in *The Harvard Classics 8: Nine Greek Dramas*, ed. Charles W. Eliot (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909), 209–210.

blind eyeballs are inoperable. Oedipus's figurative blindness is further displayed as he zealously pursues the truth, but is ignorant that ultimately, the person he seeks is the man in the mirror. The riddle solver is committed to delivering the people of Thebes from the plague pestilence but does not know that he is the reason for the deaths of his people.

Humanity is just like Oedipus because Adam is blinded from the knowledge of his true self through his spiritual death in sin. He attempts to find ultimate truth and salvation in himself, self-created deities made of wood and stone, and or religious systems. But like the protagonist in the play, he manifests his blind ignorance to his true nature and state through his misguided zeal and efforts to change himself. Humanity's blindness is directly linked to spiritual death, which can only be thwarted by the spiritual life that is found in union with Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:45). And even as the more Oedipus attempted to find out the truth through his own wisdom and actions, he manifested more and more his blindness to the reality of his true origin and nature. Even so the more humanity attempts to pay for their sins through good works, the more Adam manifests his congenital blindness of his actual state through spiritual death.

The above-stated ways are a few examples of how although Oedipus the King was written by a secular Greek poet, I believe it perspires the Biblical truth that man is dead to the knowledge of his true spiritual self, and thus, blinded from the truth known only to the Spiritually alive.