

SEER

CULTURAL INSIGHT

The word *seer* literally means “one who sees.” The King James Version of the Bible translates two Hebrew words as “seer”: *ro’eh* and *hozeh*. In 1 Chronicles 29:29, Samuel is a *ro’eh*, while Gad is a *hozeh*. Biblical scholarship has no clear consensus on the distinction between the two types of seers, although *ro’eh* comes from a root that simply means “to see” while *hozeh* refers more to visionary contexts. In the Old Testament, seers are prophetic figures, and there is clearly some crossover between the roles of prophet and seer. Like prophets, seers were often associated with kings. First Samuel 9:9 contains an antiquarian note suggesting that the words (and the roles they denote) are essentially synonymous but that the difference is largely temporal. Priests, such as Zadok, could also be identified as seers (see 2 Samuel 15:27). The largest preponderance of the word *seer* in the Old Testament is in the books of Chronicles, where it is used to describe a variety of individuals. As Chronicles dates to the Persian period, it is likely that *seer* gained prominence and grew in usage in that period. The Old Testament does not seem to display the hierarchical distinction between prophet and seer suggested in the Book of Mormon (see Mosiah 8:13–18).

Related verses

- 1 Samuel 9:9–11
- 2 Samuel 15:27
- 2 Samuel 24:11
- 1 Chronicles 9:22
- 1 Chronicles 21:9
- 1 Chronicles 25:5
- 1 Chronicles 26:28
- 1 Chronicles 29:29

2 Chronicles 9:29
2 Chronicles 12:15
2 Chronicles 16:7–10
2 Chronicles 19:2
2 Chronicles 29:30
Amos 7:12

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