

## Liturgy Lesson Nine: The First Reading

The primary part of the Jewish synagogue service was the reading from what the Jews call the Torah (tor ah) and the Nevi'im (ne veem). The Torah is the first five books of the Old Testament, and it is the Hebrew word for Law. Nevi'im is a less well-known word which means the Prophets, and applies to much of the rest of the Old Testament books. We know, for instance, that when Jesus was invited to read at the synagogue service in Nazareth, he chose a reading from Nevi'im, on that particular occasion, the prophet Isaiah.

The earliest celebrations of the Eucharist always included a reading from the Old Testament. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has restored the Old Testament to prominence because, as St. Augustine said, "In the Old Testament the New is hidden, in the New Testament the Old appears." On most Sundays of the year the first reading is from the Old Testament, although at certain times such as during the Easter season, which we are in now, the first reading is from the New Testament

It is essential that we read and study the Old Testament since we believe that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of salvation.