

## *The OT Law & Other Ancient Law Codes*

### *Law Codes*

- Israel was not the first people to have a code of laws
- Codes have been discovered that pre-date the OT Law
  - The date of the Exodus = c. 1440 BC or later

### *Comparing Codes*

- When these codes are compared to the OT law
- Definite ethical advancements are seen in the Torah
  - Torah = The OT Law

Example 1: *Laws of Eshnunna*, Akkadian law code dated c. 1800 BC

- “If a free man has no claim against another free man, but seizes the other free man’s servant girl, detains the one seized in his house, and causes her death, he must give two servant girls to the owner of the servant girl as compensation. If he has no claim against him but seizes the wife or child of an upper-class person and causes their death, it is a capital crime. The one who did the seizing must die.”

Example 2: *Law Code of Hammurabi*, Babylonian king’s law dated 1726 BC

- “If a free nobleman hit another free nobleman’s daughter and her to have a miscarriage, he must pay ten shekels of silver for her fetus. If that woman dies, they must put his daughter to death. If by a violent blow he caused a commoner’s daughter to have a miscarriage, he must pay five shekels of silver. If that woman dies, he must pay ½ a mina of silver. If he hit a free nobleman’s female servant and caused her to have a miscarriage, he must pay two shekels of silver. If that female servant died, he must pay ½ mina of silver.”
- Notice the class distinctions built into these laws
  - There are only finer for the death of a servant or commoner
  - Whereas death is the punishment for killing nobility
- Notice the gender distinctions too
  - Nobility was immune from punishment for even killing non-noble males
    - In all these situations, the “noble” killer goes free
      - Either his daughter or his servants pay the price
- In these codes, women and servants are treated like property

*Compare that to the OT Law*

- Prohibition against murder is absolutely unqualified by gender or social status (Ex. 20:13; 21:12)
- Servants also have a different status (Ex. 21:27; Deut. 23:15-16)
- And everyone pays for their own sins (Deut. 24:16)

### *Conclusion*

- God's law for Israel was calling them to a higher standard than their neighbors
- Because they were to better reflect Him to the world