

The Old Testament: Our Call to Faith and Justice

Chapter 4 Vocabulary

civil laws Laws dealing with the day-to-day issues that arise between people living in community. In the case of the Israelites, who lived in an agrarian community, such laws governed the consequences when one person's animal injured another person or when borders between properties were disputed, for example.

Covenant Code Biblically, this is the second of the law codes given by God to Moses at Mount Sinai.

Deuteronomic Code The name given to Deuteronomy 12-26, which highlights the special relationship between the Israelites and YHWH.

elders Mature, usually male, members of the Israelite community who met regularly to rule on specific disputes within the community.

Hyksos A group of non-Egyptians who came to power in Egypt roughly between 1650 and 1550 BC.

Jubilee Every seventh Sabbatical year (i.e., every forty-ninth year). In a Jubilee year, all debts were to be forgiven, and land that had been sold to pay a debt was to be returned to the original family. In this way, the wealth of the entire community was to be redistributed among the poor, preventing unrelieved poverty and large gaps between the rich and the poor.

Levitical Code This code, also called the “Holiness Code,” is found in Leviticus 17–26 and is called such because it includes several uses of the word “holy.”

murmurings The stories in the Book of Exodus of the complaints of the Israelites in the desert against Moses and against God.

natural law The participation of man in God's eternal law that reveals what God intends us to do and avoid according to his wise and loving plan.

punitive justice Laws that rely on punishment as a deterrent to criminal activity.

religious laws In the case of the Israelites, laws that govern the actions of the priests, the regulations for sacrifice, and the building and maintenance of the Temple.

restorative justice Laws that are concerned primarily with restoring community after an offense has occurred. The goal is to keep the community together, as the survival of the society depended on everyone fulfilling his or her role.