

JUSTINIAN'S CODE



Justinian wanted to save in writing all the laws that began in ancient Rome. There were thousands of Roman laws that ordered life in the empire. The most famous which were reviewed were called the Twelve Tables. These tables assured that all citizens had a right to the protection of the laws. Nearly 1,000 years later, Emperor Justinian chose ten men to review 1,600 books full of Roman Law and create a simpler legal code. These men were able to create the Justinian Code with just over 4,000 laws. They collected up all the old laws, and added new ones that gave Justinian's people even more rights.

It is not easy to write laws that are fair for everyone. Our founding fathers did a great job with the Bill of Rights, but then they had some great teachers, one of which was Justinian! Justinian wrote laws that were fair for everyone because he thought about the needs of all the people. He did such a good job way back in the year 500 that new and existing governments still refer to his laws as guides when creating laws for their own countries today.

1. What did the Twelve Tables assure for all citizens?
2. What did Justinian's Code give the people?

JUSTINIAN CODE VS. PRESENT U.S. LAWS

<i>Laws about...</i>	Justinian Code	U.S. Laws
Women's Rights	All women can own property, make contracts and will, and bring a lawsuit.	All women can own property, make contracts and wills, bring a lawsuit. Women are guaranteed the same rights as men.
Robbery	Robbery was not a crime. The victim could sue the robber for up to four times the values of the stolen property	Robbery is a crime and is punishable by a fine and/or a prison sentence.
Murder	Murder was punished by banishment.	Murder is punished by a prison sentence or death.
Inheritance	Women could not inherit property from their husbands unless it was provided in a will. Children received equal amounts of the father's estate.	Standard law allows wives and children to divide an estate. Other directions can be provided for in a will.

3. What is one thing our laws have in common with the Justinian Code?
4. How are our laws different from the Justinian Code?