

Now for the first stage we have in the book of Nehemiah the account of the people coming together and Ezra reading to them the law of Moses and their declaring their intention to abide by it and that is said to be an account of the _____ so we cannot say that there is a complete lack of positive evidence of the first stage. We can question whether this actually is evidence of the first stage but there is at least something to question. In the case of the second and third there is not even anything to question. We have no evidence whatever of any such meaning. That doesn't prove there wasn't any such meaning but it is strange indeed there wouldn't be evidence of it. If there were a man to be found dead down here in some ~~xxxxxx~~ morning on a side street and you say no one saw anybody go into the house, nobody saw any one come out of the house, it cannot have been a murder. People would say but how do we know, someone might have gone in, in the dark and no one have seen them - such things happen. But if Pres. Truman were found dead in the White House some morning and they would say - well, no one has come in or out of the White House except the people are well known, it cannot have been a murder. Somebody would say I think Gov. Dewey murdered him. They might say - well, did anybody see him go in, or out? Then he cannot have done it. In a situation which is guarded and all that, it would be very strange if he were able to get into the White House and out again without there being some evidence. Now in this case, if such a meeting was held, there would likely to be some evidence of it. The evidence might be distorted. In the first stage we have evidence of the meeting, but the evidence of the meeting, if it was such a meeting as the critics say, was distorted. Because the evidence as it stands does not say that there was a meeting to establish a canon. The evidence says that the people came together to hear the law of Moses which their ancestors had believed in and to hear what it was that their ancestors should have believed in and followed and their ancestors were sent into exile for not following and they want to know so they can follow it now. Now that is entirely different from the establishment of a new canon, from the setting up of something new as authority. It is entirely different but it is evidence of a meeting and of a meeting which dealt with the matter of the authority of the word of God, it is evidence of that. And so we can say that there is a certain amount of evidence regarding the first stage of the canon. There is evidence that Josiah swore to ~~the~~ obey the book of the law of the Lord. Now we believe that is the whole