

Hermeneutics II
Falls International Baptist Institute
The Laws of First, Further, and Final Mention: Part Two
Class Seven

Text: Isaiah 28:9-10 *“Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. Isa 28:10 For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.”*

Introduction to Class: I am departing from our normal class notes from Edwin Hartill’s “Biblical Hermeneutics” for this class. Last class period, we taught the First Mention Principle, the Progressive Mention Principle, and the Full Mention Principle from his notes. For this class, I have compiled my own notes for the student and we will both review and more fully explain these principles. To me, these principles cannot be over-emphasized. Each one of the principles we have studied thus far is a key which opens the door of understanding to the student of God’s Word. These three principles fully understood will guard the student from wrongly dividing while guiding the student into rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

I. The Law of First Mention: The First Mention Principle

A. Definitions:

1. *“That principle by which God indicates in the first mention of a subject, the truth with which that subject stands connected in the mind of God.” – Hartill*
2. *“The law of first mention says that, to understand a particular word or doctrine, we must find the first place in Scripture that word or doctrine is revealed and study that passage. The reasoning is that the Bible’s first mention of a concept is the simplest and clearest presentation; doctrines are then more fully developed on that foundation. So, to fully understand an important and complex theological concept, Bible students are advised to start with its ‘first mention.’ ”. – GotQuestions.org*

B. Importance:

1. The first mention principle teaches us that the first mention of a subject reveals God’s attitude or mind on that subject. Because the mind of God never changes, His revealed attitude in the first mention of a subject does not change either. Therefore the first mention principle unlocks God’s mind upon any given subject to us.
2. The first mention principle becomes the foundation upon which God progressively reveals and builds truth throughout the Word of God. The first mention of a word or subject will give us a fundamental basis for that truth.

C. Illustrations:

1. Jesus used this principle in Mark 10:2-9 to preach God's Mind on Marriage. We learn that marriage is supposed to be between one man and one woman until death does them part. That's fundamental to understanding God's doctrine on both marriage and the home.
2. Our understanding of God Himself begins in the first mention of God in the Book of Genesis. We learn that God is the Creator of the world. That is fundamental to our understanding of God. That means we are accountable to Him. A man will never grasp the fact that He is the Redeemer of the world which is revealed through progressive revelation until he understands that He is the Creator. Special Revelation is built on the foundation of General Revelation.
3. In fact, because Genesis is the book of beginnings, you will find the origin and first mention of many subjects in Genesis. Here are just seven instances out of literally hundreds:
 1. The Doctrine of God
 2. The Doctrine of Creation
 3. The Doctrine of Sin
 4. The Doctrine of Satan
 5. The Home
 6. Human Government
 7. The Jewish Race

II. The Law of Further Mentions: The Progressive Mention Principle

A. Definitions:

1. *"God makes the revelation of any given truth increasingly clear as the word proceeds to its consummation."* – Hartill
2. *"The progressive principle teaches that with one mind behind the writing of the scriptures, revelation will grow as scripture moves to its completion. A subject can be followed from beginning to end with increasing knowledge."*
3. *"Progressive revelation is the teaching that God has revealed Himself and His will through the Scriptures with an increasing clarity as more and more of the Scriptures were written. In other words, the later the writing the more information is given. Therefore, God reveals knowledge in a progressive and increasing manner throughout the Bible from the earliest time to later time. This makes perfect sense since we know that not everything God revealed to us was revealed right away."* – Matt Slick

B. Importance:

1. Our text verses teach that we learn doctrine *"line upon line"*, *"precept upon precept"*, *"here a little and there a little"*.
2. Within the first mention, we have the simple basic thoughts or introduction to that subject. As we begin to read and study through

the scripture, God expounds and expands truth relating to that subject. God adds details to truths already revealed. Obviously, the further we read in the scriptures, the more advanced revelation becomes.

3. This is how all of us educate our children. We teach them a basic concept such as numbers. They begin to count 1 -10. Then we add to their knowledge by progressively teaching them how to add and subtract; how to multiply and divide. Progressive revelation is how God educates us, and how we should teach our people as we plant new churches. We Slowly, Intentionally, Steadily, Purposefully teach in an organized progressive manner.

C. Illustrations:

1. Jesus told His disciples *“That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”* Matthew 13:17
2. Romans 16:25-26 says *“Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith.”* That’s progressive revelation.
3. I Peter 1:10-12 *“Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”*
We are the recipients of the first and further mention principle. We can learn things that Old Testament prophets and the angels of God don’t even know simply by comparing scripture with scripture and building upon the progressive mention of any subject within the scriptures.
4. The doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Church of the Living God, the Second Coming of Christ are just a few examples of truths that are progressively revealed throughout the scripture.

III. The Law of Full Mention: The Full Mention Principle

A. Definitions:

1. *“That principle by which God declares His full mind upon any subject vital to our spiritual life. Somewhere in the Word, God gathers together the scattered fragments that have to do with a*

particular truth, and puts them into one exhaustive statement. That is His full mind concerning that truth.” – Hartill

2. The Full Mention Principle is the legitimate conclusion of the First and Further Mention Principles.

B. Importance:

1. Once we have studied the first and further mentions of a Biblical subject, it is necessary to understand the God will normally have a passage in the Scripture where He gives His full mind on that subject. That becomes conclusive. It reveals His full and final words concerning that subject. Because God does not change, His Mind and His Word do not change!
2. The Full Mention Principle gives the teacher and preacher complete confidence and authority when teaching and preaching the Word of God. If we understand the fundamentals of a subject, and the progressive truths related to that subject, finding that passage of scripture where God reveals His full mind on that subject will both reveal harmony from the beginning to the end of God’s Word, and give us God’s Full Mind from beginning to end.

C. Illustrations:

1. The Lord’s Table is taught by our Lord Himself in the Gospels. It is further mentioned in Acts as the New Testament Church practiced it, but God’s Full Mention on the subject is in I Corinthians 11.
Spiritual Gifts and Sign Gifts are taught throughout the Word of God, but God’s Full Mind is taught from I Corinthians 12-14.
2. The Doctrine of Love is taught throughout the Word of God, but His Full Mention on the subject is found in I Corinthians 13.
3. The Resurrection is taught throughout scripture, but God’s Full Mention of the Doctrine of the Resurrection is I Corinthians 15.

Conclusion: I have only given you a few illustrations of each of these principles in this class. These principles should be applied to every subject we study in Scripture. The more we study using these principles, the greater our understanding of the scriptures will be.