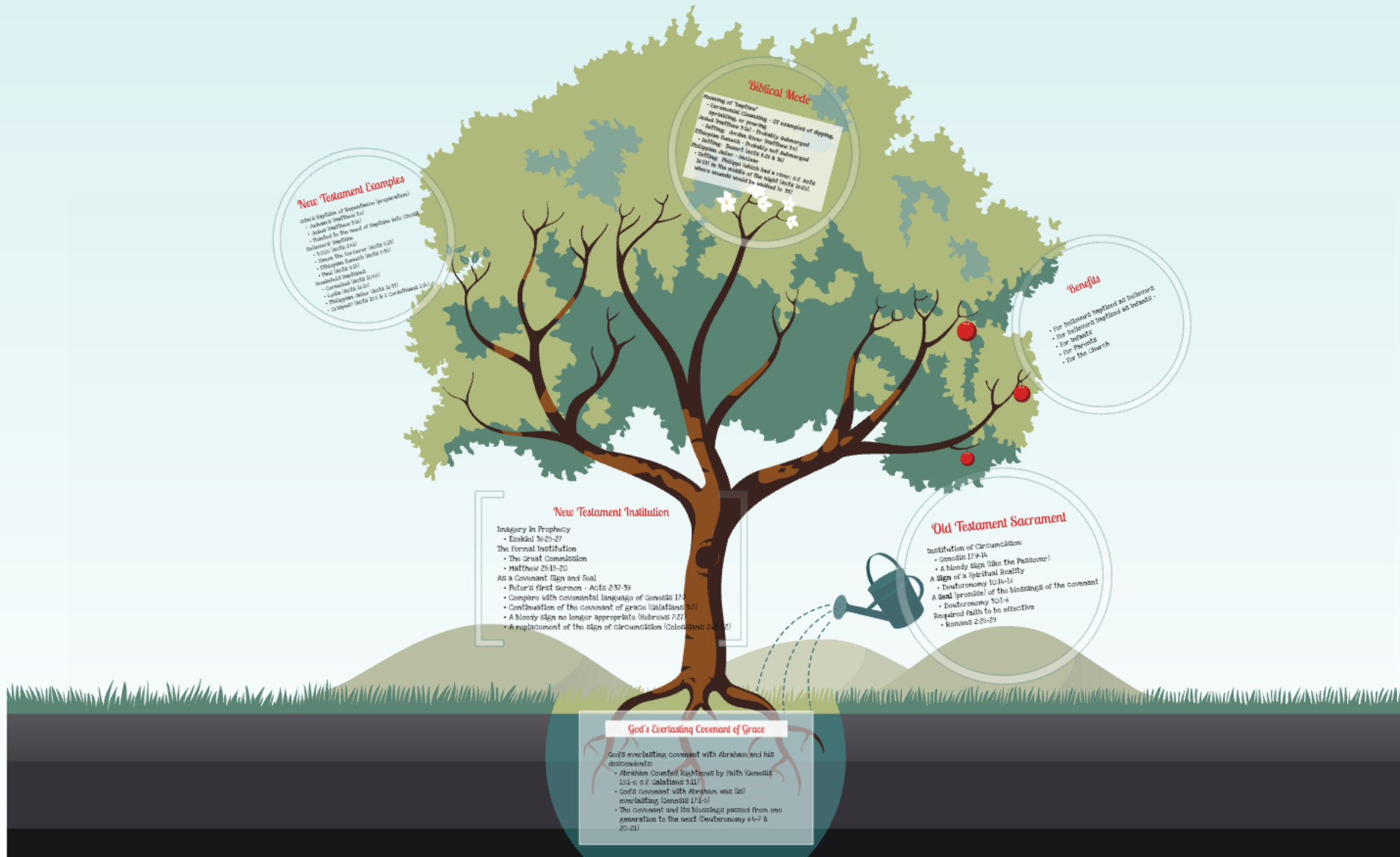


Baptism: Reformed View



Sign = A physical
representation of a spiritual
reality

Seal = A Stamp authenticating
the surety of God's promises
to those who believe

God's Everlasting Covenant of Grace

God's everlasting covenant with Abraham and his descendants:

- Abraham Counted Righteous by Faith (Genesis 15:1-6; c.f. Galatians 3:11)
- God's covenant with Abraham was (is) everlasting (Genesis 17:1-8)
- The covenant and its blessings passed from one generation to the next (Deuteronomy 6:4-7 & 20-21)



Old Testament Sacrament

Institution of Circumcision:

- Genesis 17:9-14
- A bloody sign (like the Passover)

A **Sign** of a Spiritual Reality

- Deuteronomy 10:14-16

A **Seal** (promise) of the blessings of the covenant

- Deuteronomy 30:1-6

Required faith to be effective

- Romans 2:28-29

New Testament Institution

Imagery in Prophecy

- Ezekiel 36:25-27

The Formal Institution

- The Great Commission
- Matthew 28:18-20

AS a Covenant Sign and Seal

- Peter's first sermon - Acts 2:37-39
- Compare with covenantal language of Genesis 17:7
- Continuation of the covenant of grace (Galatians 3:7)
- A bloody sign no longer appropriate (Hebrews 7:27)
- A replacement of the sign of circumcision (Colossians 2:11-12)

"Individuals (even in covenant families) are still responsible to express their personal faith, but God continues to work out his gracious promises in families as well as extending the covenant to others."

Bryan Chapell, *Why Do We Baptize Infants? Basics of the Faith Series* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2006), 13.

New Testament Examples

John's Baptism of Repentance (preparation):

- Judean's (Matthew 3:6)
- Jesus (Matthew 3:16)
- Pointed to the need of Baptism into Christ

Believers' Baptism

- 3,000 (Acts 2:41)
- Simon the Sorcerer (Acts 8:13)
- Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:38)
- Paul (Acts 9:18)

Household Baptisms

- Cornelius (Acts 10:48)
- Lydia (Acts 16:15)
- Philippian Jailer (Acts 16:33)
- Crispus? (Acts 18:8 & 1 Corinthians 1:14)

Biblical Mode

Meaning of "baptizw"

- Ceremonial Cleansing - OT examples of dipping, sprinkling, or pouring

Jesus (Matthew 3:16) - Probably submerged

- Setting: Jordan River (Matthew 3:6)

Ethiopian Eunuch - Probably not submerged

- Setting: Desert (Acts 8:26 & 36)

Philippian Jailer - Unclear

- Setting: Philippi (which had a river; c.f. Acts 16:13) in the middle of the night (Acts 16:25), where wounds would be washed (v. 33)

Conclusion:

"The important point to note is not that there is only one mode of baptism, but rather that a baptism involves a ceremonial cleansing in which the amount of liquid may vary according to the nature of the occasion."

Bryan Chapell, *Why Do We Baptize Infants?*
BASICS of the Faith Series (Phillipsburg,
N.J.: P&R, 2006), 21.

Westminster Confession of Faith

"Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but Baptism is **[also?]** rightly administered by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person."

Chapter 28, Section 3

Biblical Mode

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Benefits

- For Believers Baptized as Believers
- For Believers Baptized as Infants -
- For Infants
- For Parents
- For the Church

For Believers Baptized as Believers

- Marks entrance into the visible church
- Signifies and seals (promises) their union with Christ
- Signifies and seals their new life in Christ
- Signifies and seals the washing away of their sin

For Believers Baptized as Infants

All of the above plus the blessing of seeing in hindsight how God fulfilled His promise

"The efficacy of Baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered; yet, notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited, and conferred, by the Holy Ghost, to such (whether of age or infants) as that grace belongeth unto, according to the counsel of God's own will, in His appointed time."

WCF chapter 28, section 6

For Infants

- Marks entrance into the visible church
- Calls upon parents and the believing community to vow before God to raising the child in the faith
- Signifies and seals (promises) their union with Christ upon the condition of personal faith
- Signifies and seals their new life in Christ upon the condition of personal faith
- Signifies and seals the washing away of their sin upon the condition of personal faith

For Parents

- A reminder of the gracious promises God holds out for the child to embrace by faith
- An opportunity for the believing parent(s) to recommit their entire household to the Lord

For the Church

- A reminder to each individual believer's own baptism and the sovereign grace God has demonstrated through it
- An opportunity for the believing community to serve God by caring for the family's spiritual growth and discipleship