



POSITION STATEMENT:

BAPTISM¹

Approved by Elder Board on 11/16/20

Biblical References

Matthew 28.19-20; Acts 2, 8, 10, 11, 16, 18; 1 Corinthians 11; Colossians 2.11-12; 1 Peter 3.21

The Position of Hingham Church on Baptism

We believe and practice covenant baptism (sometimes referred to as covenant paedobaptism),² while also warmly accepting and allowing for the practice of believer's baptism (sometimes referred to as credobaptism).³ Points of disagreement notwithstanding, adherents to both of these views believe that nothing magical happens when a person is baptized. Both covenant and believer's baptism reject that subjects of baptism are regenerated through baptism or that they will automatically go to heaven upon their death. Both views reject superstitions of this sort, and agree that the subjects of baptism are merely receiving the sign of the covenant. The differences lie only in the areas of who are proper recipients of this sign (which depends on the nature of the thing being symbolized), and perhaps the mode of the baptism (i.e., sprinkling or immersion).

Christ commands baptism as an important component of the Great Commission to the church, which implies that the church must have some understanding of what baptism means in order to accomplish the Great Commission. To not adopt any position at all would be potentially confusing for the members of Hingham Church and for those whom we seek to reach with the Gospel. At the same time, dear brothers and sisters in Christ who *agree* wholeheartedly on the Doctrine of Inerrancy *disagree* on the doctrines related to baptism. In other words, because 1) two sets of Christians exist who equally depend on the Scriptures to formulate their theological beliefs and practices, and 2) it is possible for the church to allow for both baptismal practices, we believe it is right to do so.

We believe that both baptismal practices point to the Gospel, though different facets of the Gospel. Therefore, there is no difficulty in affirming our brothers and sisters who may disagree with us on *the exact nature of how* baptism signifies Gospel truth. Our mission is to "Love God. Love People. Bring Them Together." Neither practice of baptism diminishes our ability to do any of those things, and, allowing for both practices may, in fact, allow for us to do these things *more* effectively.

¹ For additional context, biblical discussion, and theological reasoning, refer to Hingham Church's elders' paper entitled "Theological Vision: Church Membership And the Sacraments."

² See, for example, the Heidelberg Catechism's Questions 69-71 for description and biblical references.

³ See, for example, chapter 29 of the 2nd London Baptist Confession (1689) for description and biblical references.